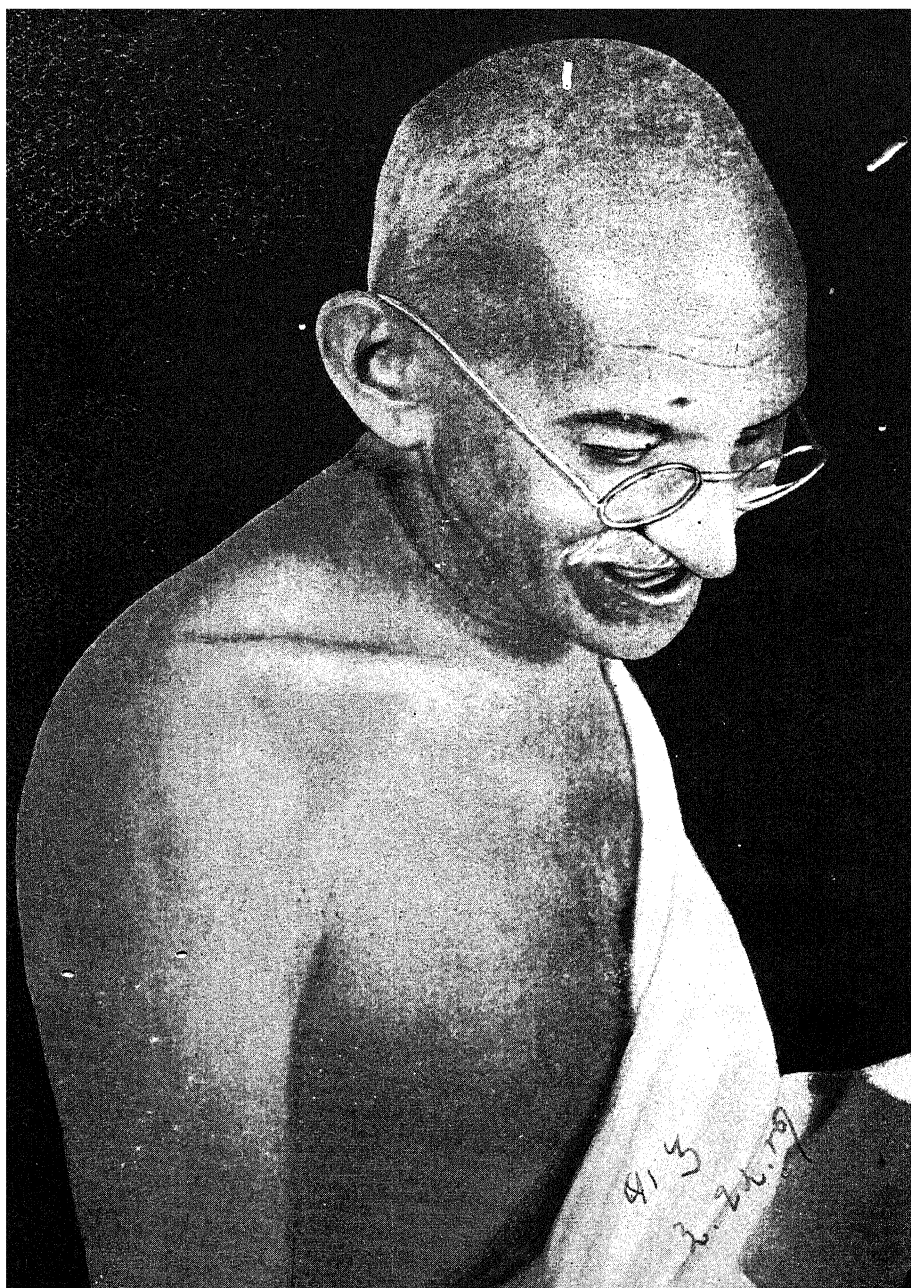


TO THE PRINCES AND THEIR PEOPLE





# TO THE PRINCES AND THEIR PEOPLE

*By*

MAHATMA GANDHI

*Gandhi Series*

VOLUME IV

EDITED & PUBLISHED

*By*

ANAND T. HINGORANI

KARACHI

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I like Anand Kishore's  
idea of collecting my  
writings under suitable  
heads. The reader will not  
fail to appreciate the  
labour he has given to  
securing attractive  
printing & binding.

mk Gandhi

## PREFACE

This is the fourth volume of the *Gandhi Series* that I have much pleasure in presenting to the public. The welcome accorded to the earlier volumes of the *Series* has proved most encouraging.

The present volume contains Gandhiji's utterances and writings in connection with the States' problem which is daily becoming worse and, therefore, calls for immediate and radical solution.

Gandhiji, while realizing the urgency and importance of the problem, counsels a course of action which, whilst it may not satisfy the radical elements in the country, is the only correct and logical one. It is also consistent with the oft-declared policy of non-violence and non-interference by the Congress in the affairs of the States.

Throughout these long years, Gandhiji's one and the only aim has been to make the Princes realize the utter absurdity of their autocracy and their reliance on the Paramount Power for the preservation of their prestige and possessions; and to make the people understand the futility of impotent rage against their rulers. To the one, he advises voluntary surrender of power; to the other, the cultivation of the will to suffer cheerfully for the assertion of their human rights and human dignity. There is no gainsaying the fact that but for Gandhiji's restraining influence on both the parties, there would have been long before this a violent revolution in the Indian States.

Lately, Gandhiji has been found deeply involved in the States' problem by the compelling force of events, and the way he has personally guided and conducted the movement for responsible government there, is a lesson for all time to the workers in the cause. His fidelity to truth and non-violence stands supreme throughout.

The articles have been grouped according to the subject matter. For instance, all articles dealing with Rajkot have been placed together in a chronological order, as also those pertaining to Travancore, Jaipur and other States. Thus, the reader will have no difficulty in locating all the articles concerning a particular State he may be interested in, and studying them in a close and connected manner. This arrangement, I believe, possesses, on the whole, more advantages than a mere chronological one which lands the reader in a thick forest, as it were, where he has to cut out a path for himself as best as he can.

October 2, 1942  
GANDHI JAYANTI

ANAND T. HINGORANI  
*Upper Sind Colony, Karachi (Sind)*



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## FOR THE PRINCES

"I think it is wrong of the Princes to let their critics say of their people that they are too backward to deserve freedom. It is a reflection on them. The people in the States belong to the same stock as those outside their borders. The Princes can lose nothing by being liberal. And they can lose everything by holding on to their autocracy."

A kind of nervousness creeps over me as I think of the Princes of India, although I have the privilege of knowing many and some even intimately. My nervousness arises from the painful knowledge that they are a creation of the British rulers. Though some of them pre-existed before the British advent, their existence thereafter depended solely on British good-will, which in its turn depended upon the price the then incumbents paid for that commodity. The present incumbents are sole creation of the Imperial Power. Its simple frown can undo them.

But they need not feel so helpless if they could consider themselves as an integral part of the nation instead of being, as they are, an integral part of the Imperial machine. If the machine topples, they may disappear unless they become part of, and depend upon, the nation.

The Empire is going either by the will of the British people, or by the force of circumstances beyond their control. India shall not always be a slave country. Will the Princes march with the times, or must they remain tied to the Imperial chariot-wheel? If they take their courage in both their hands and make common cause with the nation, they can run the risk of dispossession.

This I admit is a heroic step. They can adopt the middle course. They may earn the good-will of their people by sharing their powers with them. They will never be able to retain their absolutism for all time. But they may certainly hope to retain much if they can secure the contentment and active co-operation of the people



within their jurisdiction, in the administration of their affairs. I think it is wrong of the Princes to let their country say of their people that they are too backward to demand freedom. It is a reflection on them. The people in States belong to the same stock as those outside borders. The Princes can lose nothing by being liberal. And they can lose everything by holding on to their autocracy.

For my part, I desire not abolition, but conversion of their autocracy into trusteeship, not in name but in reality. The arbitrary powers they enjoy should go. The liberty of the people should not depend upon the will of an individual, however noble and ancient may be his descent. Nor can any person, whether prince or a princely capitalist or merchant, be the sole owner and disposer of possessions hereditary or self-acquired. Every individual must have the fullest liberty to use his talents consistently with the use by his neighbours, but no one is entitled to the contrary use of the gains from the talents. He is part of a nation, or, say, the social structure surrounding him. Therefore, he can only use his talents not for self only, but for the social structure of which he is but a part and on which his sufferance he lives. The present inequalities are due to people's ignorance. With a growing knowledge of their natural strength, the inequalities must disappear. If the revolution is brought about by violence, the position will be reversed, but not altered for the better. If by non-violence, *i.e.*, conversion, the new era which people hope for must be born. My approach and appeal are in terms of non-violence, pure and undefiled. The French have a noble motto in Liberty, Equality, Fraternity is a heritage not for the French only, but for all mankind.

What the French never realized, it is open to us to realize. Will the Princes and the princely land-holders and landlords take the lead? It is for them to take the lead for the 'have-nots,' who have nothing to share with anybody except their pauperism and abjectness. I am addressing weekly appeals to the British Power. They are in exactly in the same friendly spirit as this is. The British may not respond. If the 'haves,' who are in fact the p

on which the mighty British Power rests, can realize their obvious duty, the British Power must yield. It was because I had despaired of response from the pillars, that I have thought of moving the masses on whom the pillars rest. I may not leave a single stone unturned to avoid, if I can, what is undoubtedly a great risk. Hence, this appeal.

## TO THE PRINCES

“One thing seems to me to be clear. If the transfer of power from the Princes to the people is to take place without violence, and if the Princes are to live as such, they will have to adapt themselves to the changed circumstances.”

Several persons interested in the States have asked me what, in my opinion, is the minimum that all States should guarantee in order to come in a line with the enlightened opinion in what is called British India. I cannot vouch for what the Congress would say, if it had to give any such opinion. Perhaps, it would be wrong for the Congress to have or to give such opinion. A democratic body can only pronounce opinion on events as they happen. Be that as it may, the opinion I am about to give is only my own and binds no one but me.

The minimum, then, that all States, great and small, can give is :

1. Full civil liberty, so long as it is not used to promote violence, directly or indirectly. This includes freedom of the Press and freedom to receive newspapers which do not promote violence.
2. Freedom to the people of the States to form associations and educate public opinion in favour of establishing responsible government in their own States.
3. Freedom for Indians outside particular States to enter them without let or hindrance, so long as their activities are not directed towards the destruction of the States in question.
4. The privy purse should be limited so as not to exceed one-tenth of the income where it ranges between Rs. 10 to 15 lakhs per year, and in no case should the purse exceed Rs. 3 lakhs per year, and should include all the private expenses of the Ruler (*e.g.*, palace expenses, cars, stables, the Ruler's guests) except those which have

reference to performance of public duty which should be clearly defined.

5. Judiciary to be independent and permanent and free of all interference. In order to ensure uniformity of practice and strict impartiality, there should be an appeal to the High Court of the Province within which the State in question is situated. This may not be possible without a change in the law governing the High Courts. It can, I imagine, be easily altered if the States agree.

I have purposely avoided reference to constitutional reform. This will depend upon the situation as it exists in every State. I should assume that where local public opinion demands it, the Ruler is bound to respond.

The most contentious part of my minimum is, perhaps, the right of appeal to the High Courts. And yet, unless some such arrangement is made, pure justice cannot be guaranteed in the States whatever may be said to the contrary. This is one institution which the British have built up with patient care. No doubt, the High Court procedure is expensive and far from expeditious. The poor of the land cannot reach it. The processes are cumbersome. Often, the unscrupulous win. With all their faults, however, and except where high politics have come in, the decisions of High Courts have been just and fearless. I can think of no easy and ready-made check save that of the High Courts on the vagaries, and, sometimes, subservience to the executive, of the judiciary in the States. But I am not wedded to my solution. If something else equally effective can be devised, I should have no objection.

One thing seems to me to be clear. If the transfer of power from the Princes to the people is to take place without violence, and if the Princes are to live as such, they will have to adapt themselves to the changed circumstances. Very few people have faith in my plan, *viz.*, the plan of Princes voluntarily parting with power and becoming real trustees. The critics say it is Utopian and against human nature. I must advocate it so long as I believe in its practical possibility. The world is inevitably moving to self-destruction, or to a non-violent solution.

of all its ailments, moral, social, economical and political. The threatened World War will bring us nearer the desirable solution, if a respectable part of it survives the impending catastrophe. Whoever recognizes that the only escape from the impending fate is a non-violent solution will, therefore, apply it to his own problems, whether they are domestic, communal or any other. Non-violence is a universal law acting under all circumstances. Disregard of it is the surest way to destruction. It is only a question of time.

The Princes would not solve the riddle by the proposed combination with Girasias, Muslims, Scheduled Classes, and their own subjects who are too cowed down to resist. It is a combination that is bound to break under its own weight. It is itself an inflammable mixture. And, a combination against whom? The Congress which seeks to represent all these, not excluding the Princes themselves? The Congress will die a natural death when it ceases to be national in every sense of the term. It has that unbroken tradition for the past fifty years. Whatever transformation it undergoes, it is the only constitution that will succeed British Imperialism whose days as imperialism are numbered. British politicians realize this. They would not resist, do not want to resist, its transformation or destruction. The Imperialism is increasingly becoming a dead-weight, if only because it is based on highly organized violence. The Princes may ignore the Congress for a time. But they cannot for all time. Some are reported to have said that after all it was composed of *banias* who would show the white feather on a few knock-out blows on the head by the strong combination pictured above. I would like respectfully to point out that the Congress is not composed of *banias* who can be counted on one's finger-tips. The millions who took part in the civil disobedience fights were not *banias*. I do not thereby mean to imply that they were desirous of giving blow for a blow. Many could. But they had forsworn violence. Many Congress heads were broken by something severer than knock-out blows. All I wish to imply is that the Congress is

not composed of mere cowards. Non-violence and cowardice go ill together. I can imagine a fully armed man to be at heart a coward. Possession of arms implies an element of fear, if not cowardice. But true non-violence is an impossibility without the possession of unadulterated fearlessness.

I beseech the Princes not to underrate the Congress as a force in the country. Its policy still remains non-violent. I admit it is fast tending towards violence. I and a few of my companions are putting forth every effort in favour of non-violence. I ask the Princes, for their own sakes and for the sake of the country that has given them birth, to throw in their weight in favour of non-violence. It seems to be touch-and-go with the Congress. It will either become growingly non-violent or will presently become a violent organization, not necessarily doing immediate deeds of violence, but preparing itself for ultimate violence. It would not harbour cowards. If it does, it will cease to be the power it has become. Every Indian, high or low, (there is no high and no low for the Congress) has to make his choice.

## A MAHARAJA'S THREAT

"For better or for worse, it is well to recognize the fact that just as the vast mass of people of British India look up more to the Congress than to the Government for the removal of their woes, even so do the people of the States look to the Congress for their deliverance."

I received, some weeks ago, an important letter from Patiala. It contained such grave statements attributed to the Maharaja Sahib of Patiala that I referred them to him for confirmation or otherwise. It is now more than three weeks since I wrote to him. But I have no reply. I, therefore, presume that the statements reported by my correspondent are substantially true. Here is the main part of the letter :

"The Patiala State Praja Mandal launched *satyagraha* against the *Hidayat* of 1988, a lawless law curtailing the civil liberties of the people. On your advice, the *satyagraha* was suspended unconditionally. The Publicity Officer, Patiala, on behalf of H. H.'s Government, stated in a Press *Communique* dated 15th April, that the Government would repeal or withdraw the aforesaid *Hidayat* within 3 to 4 weeks, and further stated that the Government had constituted a Committee to go into its provisions and submit an early report. But the announcement has remained up till now a dead letter. And instead, H. H. has by *Ijlas-Khas* orders dated 25th May ordered the strict enforcement of the *Hidayat* for a period of another six months. In view of this, no propaganda of any kind can be carried on by the Praja Mandal workers, the provisions of the *Hidayat* being very wide and sweeping. The workers arrested in connection with this agitation are still in jail, and others are being tried. Apart from this, there is at present another movement going on within the State, *i.e.*, between landlords and tenants.

"Some of the Praja Mandal workers were allowed an interview with H. H. on the 18th inst. During the interview, H. H. addressed them as follows:

"My ancestors have won the State by the sword and I mean to keep it by the sword. I do not recognize, any organization to represent my people or to speak on their behalf. I am their

sole and only representative. No such organization such as Praja Mandal can be allowed to exist within the State. If you want to do Congress work, get out of the State. The Congress can terrify the British Government, but if it ever tries to interfere in my State, it will find me a terrible resister. I cannot tolerate any flag other than my own to be flown within my boundaries. You stop your Praja Mandal activities, otherwise I shall resort to such repression that your generations to come will not forget it. When I see some of my dear subjects drifting away into another fold, it touches the very core of my heart. I advise you to get out of the Mandal and stop all kind of agitation; or else, remember I am a military man; my talk is blunt and my bullet straight.’”

It may be that my letter never reached the Maharaja Sahab, and that if it had, he would have disputed the correctness of my correspondent's letter. If any repudiation is received by me, I shall gladly publish it. But I must say that my correspondent is a responsible person.

Assuming, then, that the Maharaja did make the remarks quoted, it is a serious thing for any Prince, no matter how powerful he is, to use the threats the Maharaja is reported to have done. With due respect to him, I suggest that there is too much awakening among the people throughout India to be suppressed by threats and even corresponding action. The days of unadulterated autocracy are gone for ever. It is possible, perhaps by intense frightfulness, to suppress the rising spirit of the people for some time. But I am quite sure that it cannot be suppressed for all time.

I have no desire to eliminate the Princes. Friends have complained to me that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has, however, made such a statement although the Congress has enunciated no such policy. I have not had the opportunity of asking him about the alleged remark. But assuming that he did make the statement, it can only mean that some Princes are so acting as to bring about their own elimination. It is wrong to judge him by newspaper reports. His considered opinion is to be gathered from his statement on behalf of the Standing Committee of the All-India States People's Conference. Therein he has even warned people against hasty action. He is



much too loyal a Congressman to contemplate any action in advance of known Congress policy. Therefore, the fear and hatred of the Congress on the part of some Princes are misplaced, and are calculated to injure rather than help them. The Congress is not seeking to interfere directly in the affairs of any State. But the Congress does guide the States' people. They are part of the Congress organization. They derive strength and inspiration from their connection with the Congress. I do not know how this organic relationship can be avoided. To wish its termination is like an attempt to make children disown their parents. For better or for worse, it is well to recognize the fact that just as the vast mass of people of British India look up more to the Congress than to the Government for the removal of their woes, even so do the people of the States look to the Congress for their deliverance. It is under the Congress advice and inspiration that the people of the States say that they want to grow to their full height under the aegis of their respective Princes. I hope, therefore, that the Maharaja Sahib of Patiala, and those Princes who hold the opinion attributed to him, will revise their views and welcome the movement of their people for liberty to grow to their full height, and not regard the reformers in their States as their enemies. It will be well if they will seek Congress aid in the settlement of their people's demands. But they need not do so, if they distrust Congress friendship. It is enough if they will placate the advanced section of their people by granting substantial reforms.

What is worse, in my opinion, however, than the alleged threat of the Maharaja is the breach of the promise referred to in my correspondent's letter. There is no doubt, so far as I can see, that the promise of withdrawal of the *Hidayat* of 1988 was made; there is equally no doubt that the promise has been broken. It is a dangerous thing even for a rich and powerful Prince to break his plighted word. Breach of a promise is no less an act of insolvency than a refusal to pay one's debt. I plead with the Maharaja Sahib to redeem the promise and hope that his counsellors will advise him to do so.

## MAHARAJADHIRAJA'S REPLY

Ranbir Villa,  
Chail, 9th Sept. 1939

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I thank you for your letter dated the 30th ultimo, enclosing a copy of the letter reported to have been despatched to me on the 3rd August which, as I intimated you in my telegram dated 28th ultimo, was never received by me. I was somewhat surprised to learn of the publication in the Vernacular Press of the letter from your correspondent, together with your comments, and was inclined to think that since you did not consider it worthwhile to await my reply before releasing to the Press your correspondent's letter, it was unnecessary for me to reply to your letter. However, I have since received your message, conveyed through my Vakil at Simla, informing that whereas an intimation had been given in time to the English Press to withhold publication of this matter, owing to rush of work similar instructions could not be conveyed to the Vernacular Press. I am, indeed, thankful to you for intimating me that the comments that have already appeared in the Vernacular Press will be revised or withdrawn in case it was considered necessary on receipt of my reply.

Your correspondent's letter deals with two issues, namely:

(a) the *Hidayat* of 1988,

and (b) the threatening language alleged to have been used by me during the course of an interview I gave to the deputation that waited upon me on the 18th July.

As regards the *Hidayat*, which has for some time been the subject of some controversy and criticism, I would state the following facts to enable you to appreciate my Government's attitude in this behalf.

The *Hidayat* in question is essentially an emergency legislation which was promulgated in the State on the 15th Jan. 1932 to deal with the situation arising out of the 1932 Civil Disobedience movement in British India and its repercussions on Indian States. While in British India, the situation was met by promulgating Ordinances and enacting other emergency legislations, such as the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act of 1932 with its corresponding counterparts in the British provinces as provincial enactments, the *Hidayat* of 1988 was promulgated in the State to cope with all illegal and subversive activities connected with that movement in relation to its reactions in the State. In view of the changes in the general political situation, which have taken place since, the possibilities of the future requirements as also the fact that some of my subjects considered the conditions imposed by the *Hidayat* as irksome, I appointed on the 29th March, 1939, a Committee to scrutinize the laws and regulations in force in the State

and to suggest such amendments and modifications in the extant enactments as were called for to make them more suitable to the present requirements of my people. As the revision of the *Hidayat* was thus under the consideration of my Government, those who were organizing agitation against it were informed by the District Magistrate that suitable orders would be passed regarding its revision, amendment or withdrawal as my Government would consider fit. In view of the fact that the *Hidayat* is an interstatal piece of legislation and, as such, could not be revised or repealed by a unilateral act on the part of one of the parties to it, the assurance regarding its revision could not be implemented without consulting the other parties. Meanwhile, instructions were issued to all the district authorities that since the *Hidayat* was an emergency legislation, intended to meet special situations, ordinarily its provisions should not be invoked as their regular enforcement would interfere with the right of the people of the State to hold public meetings for legitimate and lawful purposes. It is to be deplored, however, that the mischievous element, both within and without the State, hastened to abuse the liberty that the suspension of the *Hidayat* gave them, and meetings and processions were organized and outsiders were invited to address public meetings whose inflammatory utterances and activities greatly fomented communal ill-feeling and culminated in the communal clash on the 24th May 1939, as a result of which one man was fatally assaulted and several others sustained injuries. As the demonstrations and counter-demonstrations arranged by the various communities tended to accentuate the growing communal tension, and further breaches of peace were apprehended, I was constrained to order that for a period of six months the provisions of the *Hidayat*, particularly those relating to the public meetings and organization of processions, should be rigidly enforced.

The main criticism against the *Hidayat* has been that since it was intended to meet a special situation, its retention as a permanent law of the land was not justifiable. The communal disturbances, as you will agree, were precisely the kind of special situation to meet which the Government have to keep themselves armed with such special legislation. It will appear, therefore, that it is the abuse, by those who were responsible for disturbing inter-communal harmony, of the liberty conferred on them, which was responsible for the subsequent order enjoining the enforcement of the provisions of the *Hidayat*. The fact that this unfortunate occurrence rendered it necessary for me to invoke the provisions of the *Hidayat*, was appreciated even by those who had earlier organized agitation against this enactment, as is evident from their voluntary decision to abide by the order issued by me on the 25th of May. The period for which the enforcement of the *Hidayat* was enjoined is not yet over, however, as the

communal situation has since eased considerably and I have exercised clemency and withdrawn cases against those involved in this communal clash, I would have considered the desirability of revising the provisions of the *Hidayat*, but as you are aware, War has since broken out and while, for the successful prosecution thereof, emergency measures curtailing civic rights and liberties are being enforced, this emergency legislation has of necessity to be retained on the Statute Book. I have not the least intention of going back over the assurance that was given by the District Nazim, Sunam, but I am obliged to await more favourable circumstances to do the needful.

As regards the version of what transpired at the interview I gave to the deputation on the 18th July, I am sorry your correspondent has twisted what I told the deputationists, and his letter contains several half-truths and mis-statements. I had assured them that while I was most anxious to redress the genuine grievances of my subjects, I did not approve of their being misled by those who were actuated by motives not wholly impersonal. I do not precisely remember the words I used, but I think I told them that I would readily respond to all legitimate wishes of my people but would not be intimidated by any agitation engineered by those not directly interested in the points at issue, nor would I accept any dictation from any outside agency.

In view of what I have stated above, I feel your comments that have appeared in the Vernacular Press do not seem to be called for and I trust you will be good enough to withdraw them. I thank you for the courtesy you have shown me in inviting my comments on your correspondent's letter.

Yours sincerely,

YADAVINDRA SINGH

As doubt was raised whether my letter to His Highness the Maharajadhiraj was received or not, I sent a telegram to inquire whether it was received. As the reply came saying that the letter was not received, I recalled the foregoing article which had already been sent to the Manager of *Harijan*. Owing to great pressure, under which all who are assisting me are working, the article sent for *Harijan-Sevak* (Hindustani) was not recalled. Hence, I thought that the ends of truth would be served by publishing both my English article and His Highness' reply to my letter. The reply speaks for itself. It substantially confirms what my correspondent said about the *Hidayat* of 1932. It is to be hoped

that the *Hidayat* will be repealed at an early date. When the very War which is going on is claimed to be fought for democracy, it ill becomes any Prince to curtail the liberty of the people without just cause.

## THE PRINCES

“Princes must not be used or allowed to impede the march of India to freedom, even as the I.C.S., a British creation, cannot be allowed to do so. Both are bulwarks of the Empire, and both will either be found to yield willing assistance to free India or will be disbanded. This is not said to offend them. It is the naked truth.”

Whatever may be said to the contrary, I must continue to claim to be a friend and well-wisher of the Princes. For, my picture of free India has a definite place for them. And hence it is that I have been drawing attention to the weakness of their position as it exists to-day. The small Princes would do well to abdicate the powers they should never have possessed, and the powers of the bigger ones should be regularized. I have also ventured to suggest the minimum required.

No one in his wildest imagination thinks that the people of the States will for ever remain what they are. They will fight for their rights either non-violently or violently. In any case, the Princes cannot hold out against millions who have become conscious of their power, whether spiritual or physical.

If the Princes will not read the signs of the times, has the Paramount Power, which has ‘rescued’ or ‘created’ them, no duty towards the people of the States? Shri Pyarelal has examined this question and endeavoured to show that no treaty obligations absolve the Paramount Power from protecting the people against misrule, or compel it to recognize the Princes as co-equals with itself and free from all control. The very word ‘Paramountcy’ involves the final authority of the Paramount Power. The so-called treaties are not treaties between equals, but conditions and restrictions imposed upon those to whom they are given. They are so many grants made, principally or wholly, for the consolidation of Paramountcy. Law-

yers will no doubt be found who would argue that treaties are solemn pledges which can be enforced by the Princes. How can a dwarf enforce rights against a giant?<sup>1</sup>

Those who accuse the Congress of bargaining with England when she is engaged in a life and death struggle, do not know what they are saying. Anyway, I can have no part in bargaining. It is against my nature. India's birth-right may not be recognized to-day. It will be when the time comes. But the issue must be plainly understood.

I hold that, in the nature of things, it is impossible for the Congress to negotiate with the Princes directly. When the time has come, it will be found that the Paramount Power will have negotiated on their behalf with the Congress or whoever can deliver the goods. Princes must not be used or allowed to impede the march of India to freedom, even as the I.C.S., a British creation, cannot be allowed to do so. Both are bulwarks of the Empire, and both will either be found to yield willing assistance to free India or will be disbanded. This is not said to offend them. It is the naked truth. When Britain has shed imperialism, at least so far as India is concerned, it will be discovered that these two arms of imperialism

<sup>1</sup>The Princes of the present day were a creation of the British Government to subserve British interest. As against the plea that the British were bound by special treaty obligations, I contended that the Congress did not ask the British Government to disregard them. Only they could not be used to bar Indian progress, and it was wholly wrong to expect the Congress to produce an agreement with them. The Princes were not like other parties free to conclude any agreement with the Congress even if they wished. Moreover, the treaties, if they oblige the British Government to protect the Princes, equally compel them to protect the rights of the people. But it has been abundantly proved that the British had rarely interfered with the Princes purely on behalf of the people. If they had been as careful of the people's right as they were bound by the treaties to be, the people's condition would not have been as miserable as it is to-day. Had they been true to the treaties of their own making, the people of States' India should be more advanced than those of British India. I cited some telling illustrations of this neglect of duty—From *More About The Simla Visit*.

were no hindrance on England's path towards the right act.

As I visualize the War at this stage, I see that it has not yet commenced with grim earnestness. Both parties are discovering and inventing new methods of destruction, but both are, I hope, evading the terrible slaughter which must result from any serious impact between the two. Awful as the indiscriminate sinking of ships with the attendant loss of life is, it will be found to be insignificant compared to what will happen when the fight commences in right earnest. Meanwhile, moral issues are being decided for the combatants, whether they will or no. I observe that British statesmen have now begun to confine the war aims to the freedom of European nations. Unless the War comes to an abrupt end, they will find it necessary to go back to the original aim of saving the world for democracy. This War, with the gigantic preparations it has necessitated, will force the parties to cover much wider moral ground than they have perhaps contemplated. The War may, therefore, ultimately be decided on moral issues. At any rate, the Congress, which has voluntarily disarmed itself and chosen the path of peace or non-violence, is engaged in bringing the moral issue to the fore-front. And if it keeps patient, it may, by its sheer insistence on the moral issue, play an important part in preventing the impending holocaust. A clear perception of the problem of the Princes is a big part of the moral issue. I invite the Princes and their advisers and, last but not least, the British statesmen to examine it dispassionately and without the old bias.



## PRINCES IN FREE INDIA

“The Princes and all others will be true and amenable when we have become true to ourselves, to our faith, and to the nation. At present, we are half-hearted. The way to freedom will never be found through half-heartedness.”

*Commenting on Shri Jaiprakash Narain's picture of a future free Indian State and the place of Princes therein, Gandhiji wrote :*

Whilst, therefore, I have no difficulty in generally endorsing Shri Jaiprakash's proposition in terms of non-violence, I cannot endorse his proposition<sup>1</sup> about the Princes. In law they are independent. It is true that their independence is not worth much, for it is guaranteed by a stronger party. But, as against us, they are able to assert their independence. If we come to our own through non-violent means, as is implied in Shri Jaiprakash's draft proposals, I do not imagine a settlement in which the Princes will have effaced themselves. Whatever settlement is arrived at, the nation will have to carry out in full. I can, therefore, only conceive a settlement in which the big States will retain their status. In one way, this will be far superior to what it is to-day; but in another, it will be limited so as to give the people of the States the same right of self-government within their States as the people of the other parts of India will enjoy. They will have freedom of speech, a free Press and pure justice guaranteed to them. Perhaps, Shri Jaiprakash has no faith in the Princes automatically surrendering their autocracy. I have. First, because they are just as good

<sup>1</sup> “In the Indian States, there shall be complete democratic government established, and, in accordance with the principles of abolition of social distinction and equality between citizens, there shall not be any titular heads of the States in the persons of Rajas and Nawabs.”

human beings as we are; and secondly, because of my belief in the potency of genuine non-violence. Let me conclude, therefore, by saying that the Princes and all others will be true and amenable when we have become true to ourselves, to our faith, if we have it, and to the nation. At present, we are half-hearted. The way to freedom will never be found through half-heartedness. Non-violence begins and ends by turning the search-light inward.

## PRINCES

"I personally do not desire the extinction of the Princely Order. But I do want the Princes to recognize the signs of the times and shed a large part of their autocracy."

*Q.* You have, I fear, evaded the question of Princes. Generally, you go straight to your subject, but, somehow or other, you seem to have walked round this subject.

*A.* Apparently, but not really, there is some truth in the taunt. The fact is that the Princes have never before now been presented as a difficulty. They are a new arrow from the British quiver. It is British India that is fighting for freedom. The States' people are fighting their own battle in their own States against overwhelming odds. The people in the States and in British India are one. For them, the artificial boundaries do not exist. But for the administrators the boundaries are very real. British law has allowed Princes to regard as foreigners people from British India going to the States or people from one State to another. And yet Princes exist only on British sufferance. They cannot move without British permission. Their heirs have to be approved by the British *Raj*. Their tuition is also under the same supervision. They can be deposed at will. Thus, so far as the British control is concerned, they are worse off than the ordinary British subject. But so far as their people are concerned, the Princes have unlimited control over them. They can imprison them at will, and even put them to death. Theoretically, British *Raj* has a duty by the people also. But it is rarely exercised. Therefore, the people of the States labour under a double handicap. It must be clear to you from the foregoing narrative that the Congress cannot influence the Princes except through the British Government. Indeed, the latter will not permit any real approach to the Princes. I per-

sonally do not desire the extinction of the Princely Order. But I do want the Princes to recognize the signs of the times and shed a large part of their autocracy. In spite of the powerful British bayonet, the march of the people of both the Indias cannot be stayed. I am hoping that the combined wisdom of all, including the Princes and the present rulers, will prevent the march from running mad, which it is bound to do unless a smooth passage is made for it. I am putting forth the best non-violent effort I can, but my non-violence, because of my imperfections, may fail. I ask for the helping hand of those who would see India win her goal without a blood bath.

But if the Princes will not listen, I do not ask for their coercion. Let British India have her independence, and I know, the Princes know, that true freedom of British India means freedom of their people also. For, as I have said, the two are one. No power on earth can keep them in separation for all time.

## PRINCES AND PARAMOUNT POWER

"British Power is the overlord without whom the Princes cannot breathe! They are not free even to see Congressmen, much less to enter into any settlement with them. I do not complain against the Princes for what they are doing in the crisis. They are powerless to do otherwise."

*Questioning Sir Samuel Hoare's statement made in the House of Commons to the effect that the Europeans of India and the Princes were as good minorities as any other and, therefore, equally entitled to protection, Gandhiji said:*

Do not Princes stand much on the same footing as the Europeans? Many, if not most, of them are an imperial creation and sustained for imperial interests. The Princes in no way represent their people. If I published the complaints I received weekly from the people of the States, I should need to double the size of *Harijan*. They make a woeful tale, neither creditable to the Princes nor to their protector, the British authority. Does not this British protectorate mean naked imperialism? The Congress is invited to regard the Princes as a minority. British Power is the overlord without whom the Princes cannot breathe! They are not free even to see Congressmen, much less to enter into any settlement with them. I do not complain against the Princes for what they are doing in the crisis. They are powerless to do otherwise.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> They owe their existence to the Paramount Power and have no status independent of it. Strange as the assertion may appear, they can do nothing good or big without the consent, tacit or implied, of the Paramount Power. They represent nobody but themselves. To invite the Congress to settle with the Princes is the same as inviting it to settle with the Paramount Power. *Harijan*—Nov. 11, 1939.

## PRINCES AND THE BRITISH RULE

“The Princes have no incentive to be good, they are exposed to every temptation to ‘go wrong.’ They are more irresponsible than they were ever before.”

*Replying to the unjustified defence of the British rule in India by The Indian Daily Mail of Bombay, Gandhiji referred to the Princes as follows :*

But the article under consideration says that the Indian States are much worse. If they are, our thanks are again due to the British rule. The Princes have no incentive to be good, they are exposed to every temptation to ‘go wrong.’ They are more irresponsible than they were ever before. The *ryots* were once able to rise against Princely tyranny; now the Princes are protected by the awe-inspiring British Power. It is true that they are free to do what good they like. But the hot-house culture, which they are given from infancy, has given them a taste for pleasures and pomp they will not forego, and the seclusion which is imposed upon them in childhood so isolates them from their people as to make them strangers in their own land. It speaks volumes for the ancient culture that in spite of every influence to the contrary, there are bright examples now and then to be seen. Remove the dead-weight of the British rule which ‘stunts’ them and us, and they and we as independent parts of the same ancient land will grow as if by magic. But if they hug the golden chains that bind them to the British footstool, they are at liberty to hold on to the chains. India, outside the States zone, is awake and will bear the yoke no longer, even if it has to break in the attempt.

## PRINCES AND THE PRESENT CRISIS

"The Congress is not out to destroy the Princes, unless it be that they do not mend their ways and destroy themselves. Even if there is *one* Prince who will be content to be the servant of the people, the Congress will stand by him."

A few friends, who came from the Princes' India, drew a lurid picture of the state of things there—the panic and the insecurity and the impending anarchy. What are the Princes to do?

Briefly put, Gandhiji's answer was: "They should cease to be Princes and become servants of the people." He developed the answer in the course of his conversation:

"They will have to descend from their pedestal and seek the co-operation of their people. If they do so, they need not use force at all to put down the forces of disorder. The Congress does not want to do away with the Princes, and they can seek its co-operation in bringing about peace and contentment in their States.

"They will have to be genuine servants of the people. When they do so, no one will think of eliminating them. If they are the servants and the people are the masters, why should the masters do away with the servants? You say there are a number of smaller Princes to-day who are anxious to make up with the Congress. If they are, what prevents them from doing the most elementary things?"

"They," said the interviewers, "want to do certain things, but they are, on the one hand, afraid of the Paramount Power and, on the other, afraid of the people. Some kind of fear seems to have seized them that the people will want to pay off old scores."

"Both their fears are groundless. If they will do justice, I can scarcely think of the people wanting to pay off old scores. Our people are not of a revengeful nature.

Is the ruler of Aundh afraid of any rebellion in his State? He is not. For, whom will they rebel against when they know that he has divested himself of practically all power? If they want to rebel, I think he is capable of saying to them: 'Come and take charge of my palace, I shall be content to go and stay among the poorest of you.' Ap-pasaheb, the son of the Chief of Aundh, is slaving away for the people as no servant of the State does.

"But the fact is that the people have to be convinced of their *bona fides*. Let them do two things. One is that they have to purify their lives and reduce themselves to utter simplicity. The fabulous amounts they spend on themselves are unconscionable. I cannot understand how they can have the heart to squander the people's money in riotous living, when thousands of their people cannot get a square meal a day. Why should they not be content with two or three hundred rupees a month? But my point is this. Let them take what the people will give them. Their privy purse must be votable. No reforms and no budget can have any value unless the people have the fullest right to say how much their ruler will take for himself. A new age has already begun, and no ruler can conceivably be tolerated whose life does not correspond largely with the life of his people, and who does not identify himself with them.

"That is one thing. The other thing is that their judiciary will have to be above board and, therefore, independent of them. I cannot say to-day with confidence that in any State the judiciary is really independent. And, there must be complete civil liberty.

"These, then, are the first steps in the way of reform. Their fear of the Paramount Power is groundless. That Power dare not openly say or do anything to interfere with *bona fide* reforms. Wherever they have interfered, they have made some flaw in the particular Prince's character an excuse. The deduction is that Princes should be, like Cæsar's wife, above suspicion. As for the Congress, let them know that it is ever ready to come to an understanding with them. The Congress is essentially a non-violent organization. Let the Princes voluntarily



go under the authority of their people and the Congress will befriend them. If they do not do so, there are breakers ahead. The Congress, let me repeat, is not out to destroy the Princes, unless it be that they do not mend their ways and destroy themselves. Even if there is *one* Prince who will be content to be the servant of the people, the Congress will stand by him."

—*Mahadev Desai*

## PRINCES' ROLE IN NEW ORDER

"I am convinced that in the New World Order, which is bound to follow the insensate butchery dignified by the name of war, the Princes will have place only if they become true servants of the people, deriving their power not from the sword but from the love and consent of the people."

*In a message to 'The States' People, Gandhiji said :*

I am convinced that in the New World Order which is bound to follow the insensate butchery dignified by the name of war, the Princes will have place only if they become true servants of the people, deriving their power not from the sword but from the love and consent of the people.

I hold strong and decided views on the relationship between the Princes and the people. I advise the people of the States to cultivate patience and prepare themselves for the responsibilities that will devolve on them willy-nilly, by assiduously doing mute constructive work.

This does not mean submission to active and acute tyranny of which I have so many accounts coming to me. This, the victims must resist in the best manner they can. The only best manner I know is the way of non-violence, otherwise called conscious and deliberate self-suffering. But cases of individual torture and degradation have come under my notice. If they are true, and if the tortured persons do not know the way of non-violence, they will resist the tortures with all the violence they can summon from within and die in the attempt to resist the torture and degradation.

The violent resistance will almost count as non-violence, even as the resistance of a mouse to a ferocious cat will count. I have in mind an unarmed man under torture by an armed company of torturers. No man, however weak in body, if he has the will to resist and the

capacity to die bravely, need feel helpless against odds, however heavy.

I would like the Princes to accept my claim to be their true friend. As such, I would like to tell them that the way to read the signs of the times is to realize the utter helplessness of the sword. The Biblical saying is going to prove true sooner than we had expected :

*"For, all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword."*

## KATHIAWAD POLITICAL CONFERENCE

"I have staked my all in the movement for *Swaraj* in the hope that *Swaraj* is a certain cure for all our maladies. As darkness vanishes at sunrise, so when the sun of *Swaraj* rises, the dark anarchy of rulers as well as of subjects will disappear in an instant."

*The following is an English translation of Gandhiji's Presidential Address at the 3rd Kathiawad Political Conference held at Bhavnagar :*

Friends,

The Presidentship of the Kathiawad Political Conference had been offered to me before I went to jail, but I had then refused to shoulder the responsibility attaching to that honourable position. As the reasons, which then prompted my refusal, do not exist any longer, I have accepted the honour now, though not without trepidation,—trepidation because there is a wide divergence between my own views and the views held by many, on political questions. Again, the fact that I am President of the National Congress for the current year makes things rather awkward for me. That single burden is more than I can fairly discharge, and it would be almost too much for me during the year to undertake to guide the activities of this Conference in addition. If, therefore, presiding over your deliberations to-day implies any such responsibility, I may say that I am not at all in a position to do it justice. Moreover, it would be unfair if the views, which I express as President here, are imputed to the Congress simply because I happen to lead it also.

It is necessary, therefore, for me to make it clear at the outset that my views about the Indian States have nothing to do with the views of the members of the Congress. My views are personal to me. They do not bear the *imprimatur* of the Congress.

If I have been deemed worthy to be President of this Conference, I think it is because I am a native of Kathiawad, and also because I enjoy close relations with the workers in this Conference. It is only an accident that I happen to lead the Congress at present.

Before I come to the subject proper, I must place on record the demise of Bhai Mansukhlal. You all know about my relations with him. No wonder that you must feel his absence to-day; but I cannot disguise the fact that I feel it very keenly. The death of the poet, Shri Manishanker Ratnaji Bhatt, is also equally a matter for sorrow to you and to me. I had not the privilege of knowing him intimately. It is no small thing that his assistance is no longer available to us. May God give to the families of both the patience to bear their loss, and may the knowledge that we share their grief lighten their sorrow!

#### THE CONGRESS AND INDIAN STATES

I have often declared that the Congress should generally adopt a policy of non-interference with regard to questions affecting Indian States. At a time when the people of British India are fighting for their own freedom, for them to interfere with the affairs of the Indian States would only be to betray impotence. Just as the Congress clearly cannot have any effective voice in the relations between Indian States and the British Government, even so will its interference be ineffective as to the relations between the Indian States and their subjects.

Still, the people in British India as well as in the Indian States are one, for India is one. There is no difference, for example, between the needs and the manners and customs of Indians in Baroda and of Indians in Ahmedabad. The people of Bhavnagar are closely related with the people of Rajkot. Still, thanks to artificial conditions, the policy of Rajkot may be different from that of Bhavnagar. The existence of different policies in connection with one and the same people is a state of things which cannot last for any length of time. Consequently, even without any interference by the Congress, the un-

seen pressure of circumstances alone must lead to the unification of policies in spite of a multitude of separate jurisdictions. Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization.

But I am firmly of opinion that so long as British India is not free, so long as the people of British India have not attained real power, that is to say, so long as British India has not the power of self-expression,—in a word, so long as British India does not obtain *Swaraj*, so long will India, British as well as Native, remain in a distracted condition. The existence of a third power depends upon a continuance of such distraction. We can put our house in order only when British India has attained *Swaraj*.

#### THE STATUS OF INDIAN STATES UNDER SWARAJ

When *Swaraj* is attained what will things be like? There will be a relation of mutual aid and co-operation, and destructive conflict will be a thing of the past. British India under *Swaraj* will not wish for the destruction of the Indian States, but will be helpful to them. And the Indian States will adopt a corresponding attitude towards British India.

The present condition of Indian States is, in my opinion, somewhat pitiable. For, the Princes have no independence. Real power does not consist in the ability to inflict capital punishment upon the subjects, but in the will and the ability to protect the subjects against the world. To-day, Indian States do not have this ability, and consequently, by disuse, the will also is as good as gone. On the other hand, their power to oppress the subjects appears to have increased. As there is anarchy in the Empire, there is anarchy in the States subordinate to the Empire. The anarchy in the States is not so much due to the Princes and the Chiefs, as it is very largely to the present condition of India.

The present condition of India being opposed to the laws of Nature, that is of God, we find disorder and unrest all over the country. I definitely hold that all will be well

if one of the component parts of India becomes self-governing.

#### WHO MUST BEGIN?

Who, then, must take the first step? It is obvious that British India must lead the way. The people there have a consciousness of their horrible condition and a desire to be free from it, and as knowledge follows in the wake of desire, so those people only who wish to be rid of their peril will find out and apply the means of deliverance. I have, therefore, often said that the liberation of British India spells the liberation of the States as well. When the auspicious day of the freedom of British India arrives, the relation of ruler and ruled in the Indian States will not cease, but will be purified. *Swaraj*, as conceived by me, does not mean the end of kingship. Nor does it mean the end of capital. Accumulated capital means ruling power. I am for the establishment of right relations between capital and labour, etc. I do not wish for the supremacy of the one over the other. I do not think there is any natural antagonism between them. The rich and the poor will always be with us. But their mutual relations will be subject to constant change. France is a republic, but there are all classes of men in France.

Let us not be deluded by catchwords. Every single corruption which we notice in India is equally present in the so-called highly civilized nations of the West, if under a variety of names. It is distance that lends enchantment to the view; hence, things Western become invested with a sort of glamour in our eyes. In fact, there are perpetual differences even in the West between the rulers and the ruled. There, too, people seek for happiness and suffer misery in return.

#### ABOUT THE INDIAN STATES

Many Kathiawadis complain to me against the Princes and Chiefs of this beautiful country, and take me to task for what they imagine to be my indifference. These impatient friends will, perhaps, not understand me when I say that I have not been indifferent, but have been seek-

ing for, and applying the remedies for, the present disorders. I have staked my all in the movement for *Swaraj* in the hope that *Swaraj* is a certain cure for all our maladies. As darkness vanishes at sunrise, so when the sun of *Swaraj* rises, the dark anarchy of rulers as well as of subjects will disappear in an instant.

### VISIT TO EUROPE

The administration of Indian States is the subject of constant criticism from which this small province has not been free. There is one common complaint about the Princes and Chiefs. Their fondness for visits to Europe increases day by day. One can understand their going to Europe on business or for the acquisition of knowledge. But a visit to Europe in the search of mere pleasure would seem to be intolerable. When a Prince passes most of his time outside his State, there is chaos in his State. We have seen that in this age of democracy and dissemination of knowledge, no State or organization which is not popular or beneficial to the people can continue to exist. Indian States are not immune from the operation of the law. Their administration will always be compared with that of the British now, and of the *Swaraj* Government when *Swaraj* has been established. King George cannot leave England without the consent of his ministers. And yet his responsibilities are not so great as those of Indian Princes. Indian Princes retain all power in their own hands. They make the appointments even to minor posts. Their permission is needed even for the construction of a bridge. In these circumstances, their visits to Europe are very distasteful to their subjects.

The expenditure incurred on these visits is also intolerable. If the institution of kingship has a moral basis, Princes are not independent proprietors but only trustees of their subjects for revenue received from them. It can, therefore, be spent by them only as a trust money. It may be said that this principle has been almost completely carried out in the English Constitution. In my humble opinion, the lavish expenditure incurred by our



Princes in Europe is absolutely indefensible.

Sometimes this expenditure in Europe is sought to be justified on the plea that Princes go there for the benefit of their health. This plea is perfectly ludicrous. No one need, in the search of health, leave a country where Himalaya, the King of Mountains, exercises undisturbed sway, and which is watered by such mighty rivers as the Ganges, the Indus and the Brahmaputra. A country where millions of men enjoy perfect health should be enough to supply the Princes' needs on that score.

#### IMITATION OF THE WEST

But, perhaps, the worst disadvantage of these excursions is the shallow imitation of the West by the Princes. We have much to learn and receive from the West, but there is also much in it which must be rejected. There is no reason to suppose that what suits the climate of Europe will equally suit all climates. Experience teaches us that different things suit different climates. The manners and customs of the West could be but ill-digested by the East, and *vice versa*. Among Western nations, men and women dance together, it is said, with restraint and, as report goes, do not overstep the bounds of decency although they indulge in spirituous liquors during the intervals of their dances. I need scarcely say what would be the consequences if we were to imitate this custom. How shameful to us is the case of an Indian Prince, which is being discussed in the newspapers just now in all its hideous detail!

#### UNCHECKED EXPENDITURE

Another complaint is made in connection with the unchecked expenditure of Princes and Chiefs. Much of this is difficult to defend. Princes may have the right to spend money on luxuries and pleasure within limit. But I take it that even they do not wish for unrestricted liberty in this matter.

#### REVENUE SYSTEM

The revenue system in the States is also not free from blame. I am confident that their imitation of the British

system has done a great injury to their subjects. The British revenue system may have a shadow of justification if we grant that it is morally right for a handful of Englishmen to maintain their hold over our country in any and every circumstance. There can be no such plea of compelling necessity in the case of the Indian Princes. They have nothing to fear from their subjects, as their existence is never in danger. They do not need a large military force; no Prince has got this and the British would never permit it. Still, they levy a taxation far beyond the capacity of the subjects to pay. I am pained to observe that our ancient tradition, that revenue is intended only for popular welfare, has been receiving but scant respect.

#### ABKARI

The Princes' imitation of the British Abkari Department in order to increase their revenue is particularly distressing. It is said that Abkari is an ancient curse in India. I do not believe it to be so in the sense in which it is put. Princes, in ancient times, perhaps, derived some revenue from the liquor traffic, but they never made the people the slaves of drink they are now. Even granting that I am wrong, that Abkari, in its present form, has been in existence from times immemorial, still I do not subscribe to the superstition that everything is good because it is ancient. I do not believe either that anything is good because it is Indian. He who runs may see that opium and such other intoxicants and narcotics stupefy a man's soul and reduce him to a level lower than that of beasts. Trade in them is demonstrably sinful. Indian States should close all liquor shops and thus set a good example for the British administrators to follow. I congratulate the Kathiawad States which have tried to introduce this reform, and I trust the day is not distant when there will be not a single liquor shop in our peninsula.

#### SPECIAL CASES

I constantly receive complaints against particular States for publication and criticism in *Young India* and

*Navejivan*, but I do not propose to refer to them just now, nor have I referred to them in those journals. I prefer to be silent so long as I am not in possession of all facts and have not heard what the States in question have to say. I hope to be enlightened about these things in the Subjects Committee, and if, then, I find it proper to say or to do anything, I would certainly move in the matter.

#### KHADI AND THE SPINNING-WHEEL

There are two items in which we can expect full co-operation from the Indian States. At one time our national economics was this, that just as we produced our own corn and consumed it, so did we produce our own cotton, spin it in our homes and wear the clothes woven by our weavers from our own yarn. The first part of this description is still true, while the latter part has almost ceased to hold good. A man generally spends upon his clothing a tenth of what he spends upon his food; hence, instead of distributing ten per cent of our income among ourselves, we now send it to England or to our own mills. That means that we lose so much labour, and in the bargain spend money on our clothing and consequently suffer a two-fold loss. The result is that we stint ourselves in the matter of food in order to be able to spend on clothing, and sink into greater and greater misery day by day. We are bound to perish if the twin industries of agriculture and spinning as well as weaving disappear from our homes or our villages. I will leave it to the members of the Conference to imagine what would be the consequence if all the villages under Bhavnagar were to order out their food and clothing from Bhavnagar. Still, it is this unnatural procedure which we have adopted about our clothing. We either import our clothing from foreign countries or else get it from our mills. In either case, it spells decay of our rural population.

Let us not be deluded by the example of the other countries which import their clothing from outside and still do not suffer economically. In the other countries, if people give up spinning and weaving, they take to some still more remunerative industry instead. We, on the

other hand, gave up spinning and partly weaving and had nothing else to occupy the time thus left vacant.

For Kathiawad, it is very easy to escape from the economic catastrophe. Our Princes can encourage the people by personal example, and induce them to reinstate *Khadi* in their homes and thus arrest the progress of the ever-deepening poverty of Kathiawad. In my view, the starting of mills and ginning factories in Kathiawad will not make for the people's prosperity, but will be in the nature of a disaster. It is not a healthy sign that the middle class people are compelled to leave the peninsula in search of a livelihood. There is no harm if a few enterprising men leave Kathiawad in search of fortune; but it is shameful and disgraceful for the States that their subjects being reduced to poverty should feel compelled to leave the country from pure helplessness. Whenever I have returned to Kathiawad, after staying outside for some time, I have found that the people have been losing instead of gaining in stamina.

Fortunately, the arts of hand-spinning and hand-weaving are being revived day by day and the importance of *Khadi* is being realized. Will not the Princes and Chiefs help this movement? It will reflect no small credit on them if they educate the cultivators to stock cotton sufficient for the requirements of Kathiawad, and spread the use of *Khadi* by wearing it themselves. All *Khadi* need not be coarse. The Princes by encouraging hand-spinning and hand-weaving can revive many arts and crafts connected with weaving. Royal ladies can spin fine yarn on wheels artistically painted and adorned with silver bells, get it woven into fine muslin and deck themselves with it. I have personally seen delicate varieties being woven in Kathiawad. That art has now nearly died out. Is it not the special duty of Princes to encourage such arts?

#### UNTOUCHABILITY

Another extremely important question is that of untouchability. The suppressed classes, perhaps, suffer more in Kathiawad than in other parts of Greater Gujarat. They are harassed even in railways. To succour

the distressed is the special mission of Princes. They are the natural champions of the weak. Will they not come to the aid of the suppressed classes? Princes live by the blessings of their subjects. Will they not enrich their own lives by earning the blessings of the suppressed? The scriptures proclaim that there is no distinction between a Brahman and a scavenger. Both have souls; both have five organs of sense. If they wish, the Princes can do much to ameliorate the condition of these classes and can remove untouchability by association with them in a religious spirit. Let them found schools and sink wells for the suppressed and find a throne in their hearts.

#### WHY I HAVE CRITICIZED ?

I have not criticized the States for the sake of criticism. I know the Gandhi family has been connected with them for three generations. I have myself been witness to ministership in three States. I remember that the relations of my father and my uncle with their respective States were perfectly cordial. As I believe that I am not devoid of the sense of discrimination, I am anxious to see only the good points of the States. As I have already said, I do not desire their destruction. I believe that the States can do much good to the people. And if I have embarked upon criticism, it is in the interests of the Princes as well as of their subjects. My religion is based on truth and non-violence. Truth is my God. Non-violence is the means of realizing Him. In passing criticisms, I have endeavoured to state the truth and have been actuated purely by the spirit of non-violence or love. I pray that the Princes and Chiefs may understand and accept my remarks in the same spirit.

#### RAMA RAJ

My ideal of Indian States is that of Rama *Raj*. Rama, taking his cue from a washerman's remark and in order to satisfy his subjects, abandoned Sita who was dear to him as life itself and was a very incarnation of pity. Rama did justice even to a dog. By abandoning his kingdom and living in the forest for the sake of truth,

Rama gave to all the kings of the world an object-lesson in noble conduct. By his strict monogamy, he showed that a life of perfect self-restraint could be led by a royal householder. He lent splendour to his throne by his popular administration and proved that *Rama Raj* was the acme of *Swaraj*. Rama did not need the very imperfect modern instrument of ascertaining public opinion by counting votes. He had captivated the hearts of the people. He knew public opinion by intuition, as it were. The subjects of Rama were supremely happy.

Such *Rama Raj* is possible even to-day. The race of Rama is not extinct. In modern times, the first Caliphs may be said to have established *Rama Raj*. Abubaker and Hazrat Umar collected revenue running into crores, and yet personally they were as good as *fakirs*. They received not a pie from the public treasury. They were ever watchful to see that the people got justice. It was their principle that one may not play false even with the enemy, but must deal justly with him.

#### TO THE PEOPLE

In my humble opinion, I have done my duty by the Princes in saying a few words about them. A word now to the people. The popular saying: 'As is the king, so are the people'—is only a half-truth. That is to say, it is not more true than its converse: 'As are the people, so is the prince.' Where the subjects are watchful, a prince is entirely dependent upon them for his status. Where the subjects are overtaken by sleepy indifference, there is every possibility that the prince will cease to function as a protector, and become an oppressor instead. Those who are not wide awake, have no right to blame their prince. The Princes, as well as the people, are mostly creatures of circumstances. Enterprising Princes and peoples would mould circumstances for their own benefit. Manliness consists in making circumstances subservient to ourselves. Those who will not heed themselves perish. To understand this principle is not to be impatient, not to reproach Fate, not to blame others. He who understands the doctrine of self-help, blames

himself for failure. It is on this ground that I object to violence. If we blame others, where we should blame ourselves, and wish for or bring about their destruction, that does not remove the root cause of the disease which, on the contrary, sinks all the deeper for the ignorance thereof.

#### SATYAGRAHA

We, then, see that the people themselves are as responsible as, and even more responsible than, the Princes for the defects pointed out by me. If public opinion is opposed to a particular line of action, it should be impossible for the Prince to adopt it. Opposition here does not mean merely inaudible murmur. Public opposition is effective only where there is strength behind it. What does a son do when he objects to some action of his father? He requests the father to desist from the objectionable course, *i.e.*, presents respectful petitions. If the father does not agree in spite of repeated prayers, he non-co-operates with him to the extent even of leaving the paternal roof. This is pure justice. Where father and son are uncivilized, they quarrel, abuse each other and often even come to blows. An obedient son is ever modest, ever peaceful and ever loving. It is only his love which, on due occasion, compels him to non-co-operate. The father himself understands this loving non-co-operation. He cannot endure abandonment by or separation from the son, is distressed at heart and repents. Not that it always happens thus. But the son's duty of non-co-operation is clear.

Such non-co-operation is possible between a Prince and his people. In particular circumstances, it may be the people's duty. Such circumstances can exist only where the latter are by nature fearless and are lovers of liberty. They generally appreciate the laws of the State and obey them voluntarily without the fear of punishment. Reasoned and willing obedience to the laws of the State is the first lesson in non-co-operation.

The second is that of tolerance. We must tolerate many laws of the State, even when they are inconvenient.

A son may not approve of some orders of the father, and yet he obeys them. It is only when they are unworthy of tolerance and immoral that he disobeys them. The father will at once understand such respectful disobedience. In the same way, it is only when a people have proved their active loyalty by obeying the many laws of the State that they acquire the right of civil disobedience.

The third lesson is that of suffering. He who has not the capacity of suffering cannot non-co-operate. He who has not learnt to sacrifice his property, and even his family, when necessary, can never non-co-operate. It is possible that a Prince enraged by non-co-operation will inflict all manner of punishments. There lies the test of love, patience, and strength. He who is not ready to undergo the fiery ordeal cannot non-co-operate. A whole people cannot be considered fit or ready for non-co-operation when only an individual or two have mastered these three lessons. A large number of the people must be thus prepared before they can non-co-operate. The result of hasty non-co-operation can only lead to harm. Some patriotic young men, who do not understand the limitations noted by me, grow impatient. Previous preparation is needed for non-co-operation, as it is for all important things. A man cannot become a non-co-operator by merely wishing to be one. Discipline is obligatory. I do not know that many have undergone the needful discipline in any part of Kathiawad. And when the requisite discipline has been gone through, probably, non-co-operation will be found to be unnecessary.

As it is, I observe the necessity for individuals to prepare themselves in Kathiawad as well as in other parts of India. Individuals must cultivate the spirit of service, renunciation, truth, non-violence, self-restraint, patience, etc. They must engage in constructive work in order to develop these qualities. Many reforms would be effected automatically, if we put in a good deal of silent work among the people.

#### THE POLITICALS

Kathiawad is famous for its political class. This



class affects an exaggerated politeness and consequently it has developed hypocrisy, timidity and sycophancy. They are an educated body of men and, therefore, they must become the pioneers in reforms. They can do much for the people, if they wish. We find contentment among the people in places where these political officials are men of character. Needless to say that my remarks apply to the politicals as a class. I do not wish to suggest that they apply to every member of that class. On the contrary, I know that some of the best of workers are drawn from this class. Hence, I have never lost hope about this class. Much good might result if only it serves the States, not for making money but for pure service.

#### OTHER CLASSES

Again, constructive service is easy for those who not serving the States have adopted an independent profession. I am anxious to see them develop the qualities mentioned above. We want silent workers and pure fighters who would merge themselves among the people. Workers of this description can be counted on one's fingers. Is there even one such worker for every village in Kathiawad? I know the answer is in the negative. The class of people who will read this will hardly have any idea of rural life. Those who have some idea of it will not like it. Still India, and hence Kathiawad, lives in the villages.

#### THE SPINNING-WHEEL

How is this service to be rendered? Here I give the first place to the spinning-wheel. I have heard much against it. But I know the time is near when the very thing which is being abused to-day will be worshipped as *Sudarshan Chakra*. I am confident that if we do not take it up voluntarily, the force of circumstances will compel us. The study of Indian economics is the study of the spinning-wheel. It is the *sine qua non* for the revival of our languishing village industries. I do not look upon hand-spinning as an occupation, but as a duty incumbent upon followers of all religious sects and denominations.

An American writer says that the future lies with the nations that believe in manual labour. Nations are tired of the worship of lifeless machines, multiplied *ad infinitum*. We are destroying the matchless living machines, *viz.*, our own bodies, by leaving them to rust and trying to substitute lifeless machinery for them. It is a law of God that the body must be fully worked and utilized. We dare not ignore it. The spinning-wheel is the auspicious symbol of *Sharir Yajna*—body labour. He who eats his food without offering this sacrifice steals it. By giving up this sacrifice, we became traitors to the country and banged the door in the face of the Goddess of Fortune. The numerous men and women in India, whose bodies are mere skeletons, bear witness to this. My revered friend Shri Shastriar says I am interfering even in the people's choice of their dress. This is perfectly true. It is the duty of every servant of the nation to do so, whenever it becomes necessary. I would certainly raise my voice against it, if the nation takes, say, to the pantaloons. It is wholly unsuited to our climate. It is the duty of every Indian to raise his voice against the nation using foreign cloth. The opposition really is not to the cloth being foreign, but to the poverty which its importation brings in its train. If the nation gives up its *jawar* and *bajri* and imports oats from Scotland or rye from Russia, I would certainly intrude into the nation's kitchen, would scold it to the full, and even sit *dharna* and make the agony of my soul heard. Such intrusions have even happened within recent times. During the late diabolical war in Europe, people were compelled to raise particular crops, and the States controlled the food and drink of their subjects.

Those who wish to serve in the villages cannot but take up the study of the spinning-wheel. Hundreds and even thousands of young men and women can earn their livelihood by its means and doubly repay the nation for it. This work means organization and familiarity with every villager to whom one could easily impart a rudimentary knowledge of economics and politics. The work might also include the true education of the village children and

give one an insight into the many wants and shortcomings of villages.

Not only is there no conflict possible between a Prince and his subjects in this *Khadî* work, but, on the other hand, their relations might be expected to become cordial. The fulfilment of this expectation is conditional on the workers' humility. I am, therefore, neither ashamed nor do I hesitate in asking this Political Conference to give prominence to the spinning-wheel.

#### THE SUPPRESSED CLASSES

Such also is the work among untouchables. It is the bounden duty of all Hindus to remove untouchability. Here also, no interference need be feared from any Prince. I firmly believe that Hindus would regain the strength of soul, if by serving the suppressed and receiving their hearts' blessing they carried on a process of self-purification. Untouchability is a great blot on Hinduism. It is necessary to remove that blot. The Hindu who serves the suppressed will be a saviour of Hinduism, and will enshrine himself in the hearts of his suppressed brothers and sisters.

Power is of two kinds. One is obtained by the fear of punishment, and the other by arts of love. Power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent than the one derived from fear of punishment. When the members of this Conference will prepare themselves by loving service, they will acquire the right to speak on behalf of the people and no Prince will be able to resist them. Then only is there an atmosphere for non-co-operation, if it ever becomes necessary.

But I have faith in the Princes. They will at once recognize the force of such enlightened and forceful public opinion. After all, the Princes, too, are Indians. This country is all in all to them, as it is to us. It is possible to touch their hearts. I, for one, do not think it difficult to make a successful appeal to their sense of justice. We have never made an earnest effort. We are in a hurry. In conscientiously preparing ourselves for service lies our victory, the victory of Princes as well as the people.

## HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

The third question is that of Hindu-Muslim unity. I have one or two letters from Kathiawad which show that this question is exercising some minds even in Kathiawad. I need scarcely say that there must be unity between Hindus and Mussalmans. No worker dare ignore any single part of the nation.

## MY FIELD OF LABOUR

I know that to many my speech will appear incomplete and even insipid. But I cannot give any practical or useful advice by going outside my province. My field of labour is clearly defined and it pleases me. I am fascinated by the law of love. It is the philosopher's stone for me. I know *ahimsa* alone can provide a remedy for our ills. In my view, the path of non-violence is not the path of the timid or the unmanly. *Ahimsa* is the height of *Kshatriya Dharma*, as it represents the climax of fearlessness. In it, there is no scope for flight or for defeat. Being a quality of the soul, it is not difficult of attainment. It comes easily to a person who feels the presence of the soul within. I believe that no other path but that of non-violence will suit India. The symbol of that *dharma* for India is the spinning-wheel, as it alone is the friend of the distressed and the giver of plenty for the poor. The law of love knows no bounds of space or time. My *Swaraj*, therefore, takes note of *Bhangis*, *Dheds*, *Dublas* and the weakest of the weak, and, except the spinning-wheel, I know no other thing which befriends all these.

I have not discussed your local questions of which I have not sufficient knowledge. I have not dealt with the questions of the ideal constitution for the States, as you alone can be its fashioners. My duty lies in discovering and employing means by which the nation may evolve the strength to enforce its will. When once the nation is conscious of its strength, it will find its own way or make it. That Prince is acceptable to me who becomes a Prince among his people's servants. The subjects are the real master. But what is the servant to do if the master

goes to sleep? Everything, therefore, is included in trying for a true national awakening.

Such being my ideal, there is room for Indian States in *Swaraj* as conceived by me, and there is full protection guaranteed to the subjects for their rights. The true source of rights is duty. I have, therefore, spoken only about the duties of Princes as well as the peoples. If we all discharge our duties, rights will not be far to seek. If leaving duties unperformed we run after rights, they will escape us like a will-o'-the-wisp. The more we pursue them, the farther will they fly. The same teaching has been embodied by Krishna in the immortal words: 'Action alone is thine. Leave thou the fruit severely alone.' Action is duty; fruit is the right.

## RULERS AND RULED

“No people have risen who thought only of rights. Only those did so who thought of duties. Out of the performance of duties flow rights, and those that knew and performed their duties came naturally by the rights.”

*The following is a substance of Gandhiji's concluding speech at the Kathiawad Political Conference held at Bhavnagar :*

Whenever I have come to Kathiawad, I have been covered with overflowing love. It is no wonder when I know that everywhere in India I find Kathiawad, *i.e.*, the overwhelming love of Kathiawad. Much as I prize that love, I crave for that 'love, amazing love divine' which nourishes the soul, and not the love which, not being backed by the will to perform promises made, withers the soul. It is service of the people that connects you and me, and not circumstances of a private nature. Unless therefore, you give all your love practical shape, turn it into work of public benefit, it has, for me at least, no meaning. I am an ordinary mortal, as much exposed to affections and passions as any one of you. But I always try to control them. I, therefore, demand love which soothes but does not overwhelm. I want the fire of that love to purify, and not to burn me. Let all your love, therefore, be converted into work in fulfilment of the national programme.

I am grateful to you for allowing me to exercise the fullest discretion as regards the resolutions you had drafted for consideration before the Subjects Committee. Your draft contained a long list of grievances. I asked you to restrain the desire for passing resolutions regarding grievances, and to cultivate self-discipline and the capacity of suffering. You accepted my advice, not out of regard for my personality, but because you know that I am a practical man and have some experience of

public affairs. In advising you, however, to drop most of your resolutions, I did not mean to muzzle myself, too, on the matters referred to therein. I have taken up greater responsibility on my shoulders. I do not want to go to sleep because you have waived all discussion of your grievances. It shall be, for me, a year of intense, unremitting toil.

But I shall work on my condition. The advice I have given you is based on trust, trust in human nature, trust in the Kathiawad Chiefs. Even so, at Amritsar, I pleaded with my brother delegates not to distrust Mr. Montagu, not to distrust Lord Sinha's judgment, not to distrust His Majesty the King, and you know that the Congress accepted my advice to a considerable extent: You must remember that against me was ranged that day no less an opponent than the late Lokamanya Tilak. But he and the others saw that I was suggesting the proper thing and accepted my suggestion. I pleaded with them, somewhat in this wise: 'Accept the Reforms to-day, as given in good faith. The moment you feel that they are more a burden than a blessing, you may reject them. For, Mr. Montagu says that he has tried to secure all that he could for us. Lord Sinha, a man in the know and a distinguished patriot, has also advised the country to accept the Reforms. The King's message, too, was couched in graceful language.' All those considerations led me to suggest acceptance of the Reforms. Out of that state of trust, when it was proved to be misplaced, arose Non-co-operation. To-day, too, I am asking you to adopt a policy of trust. But pray do not press the parallel too far. It is meant only to assure you that I do not want to sit silent. I have heard more tales of woe than you have told me. I do not know how much of all I have heard is true. But you may be sure that as soon as I am convinced that the complaints are true, I shall use whatever ability and resourcefulness I possess to get them remedied. I shall try to see the Princes concerned. If I succeed in getting a hearing from them, I shall discuss all your grievances with them and shall, if permitted, acquaint the public with the result. Mussalman friends

from Dhoraji had a series of grievances against the Thakore Saheb of Gondal. They asked to be permitted to place them before the Conference. But I dissuaded them, as I was not in possession of the facts. I have the honour to know the Thakore Saheb of Gondal. I have had the pleasure of meeting him. I regard him with respect and I know that he is a capable ruler. It is, therefore, unbearable that he should mean or do any harm to his subjects. How can I indict him at the instance of half a dozen or more people? So long as I have not seen him or not spoken to the subordinate officers concerned, it would not be possible for me to give any definite lead. It would be against my nature to do so. I, therefore, assured Mr. Dhorajiwala that I would inquire into all his charges, and then do the needful. It was an awkward situation my having to advise the Mussalman friends who might not trust me and know that I make no distinction between a Hindu and a Mussalman. But Maulana Shaukat Ali's arrival has fortified me. I told them that the Maulana and I would both consider over the matter, and give them our joint advice. I am glad to say that they agreed to this.

Jamnagar is in the same position as Gondal. I have numerous complaints against the ruler of that State also. If a subject may claim friendship with a ruling Prince, I may say that Jam Saheb and I were friends in our youth. The late Kevalram Mavji Dave gave me a note of introduction to Jam Saheb when I went to England. Very often we used to meet each other there, and the wish was dearest to the hearts of every one of us, his friends, that he should succeed to the *gadi* of Jamnagar. But to-day I hear numerous charges against him, none of which I wish may be true. I wish that Jam Saheb should, of his own accord, remedy all the wrongs (if any) that may have been committed against his subjects by him or in his name. It is not my purpose to embarrass him. I should approach him in all humility and plead with him. I should do the same with my bitterest opponent. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, for instance, thinks I am the wickedest man on earth. If he were to return to India as the



King's representative, I would not hesitate to approach him, if need be, in all humility. Why should I do otherwise with Jam Saheb? I have a huge pile of material before me aspersing both him and the Thakore Saheb of Gondal. But how can I make use of it, how can I criticize them without inquiring? But I am not going to ignore or suppress any of the charges or complaints. I shall, during the current year, try my best to get them investigated and shall submit to you a day-to-day diary of my work at the close of the year.

A word now for your part of the bargain. I asked you not to disturb the task I have undertaken, by private or public criticism of a bitter or rancorous nature. I ask you not to irritate the Princes. They are, after all, rulers and are, therefore, like all men in authority. Authority blurs the vision. We cannot have Rama in every age, nor Umar. None of the Caliphs, who came after the glorious thirty years of the Caliphate, could ever approach any one of the first four Caliphs. Such rulers are rare, even as the gems embedded in the most hidden recesses of mines. Wherever, therefore, I find a ruler getting irritated or angry, I am patient with him. For, anger is natural to them as much as to you or me, if we were similarly placed. Kings are no more philosophers or saints than any one of us. The world knows only one Janak Videhi. Even under *Swaraj*, we shall have to put up with a fair amount of failings of the *Swaraj* officials. Why, only an hour ago, perhaps, I gave you a foretaste of how a man in authority behaves. How can I say that I did not, in any instance, abuse my authority? A Shastri and a Muni asked for permission to speak; I did not give it. I told the Muni: 'No more this wordy warfare for you. Your business is to go about from place to place introducing *Charkehas* in every home.' How do I know that I did not exceed the bounds of propriety in thus disallowing both? But I was clothed in authority, however brief, and so you put up with me. Wherever there is the use of authority, there is scope for anger and injustice, and we must need drink many a bitter cup at the hands of rulers.

I have thus presented to you two sides of the case, one for the rulers and the other for the ruled. It is unbearable for me that a Kathiawad Prince should do wrong to his subjects. To him I say: 'For what earthly use do you behave thus?' To you I say: 'You must learn lessons of forbearance and self-suffering.' I commend to your attention the last paragraph of my printed Presidential Address.<sup>1</sup> I would ask you to read and read that paragraph and to chew and digest it. No people have risen who thought only of rights. Only those did so who thought of duties. Out of the performance of duties flow rights, and those that knew and performed their duties came naturally by the rights. The *Shastras* inculcate reverence to parents. It means implicit obedience to them, and why do we willingly obey like that? We know that an angry look from his mother was sufficient to make the giant-like Shaukat Ali cower before her. What is the secret of this willing obedience? It is, that the obedience carries with it enjoyment of a right—the right to inheritance. At the back of obedience is a consciousness of a right to be enjoyed, and yet woe to the man who obeys with an eye to the right to inheritance. It is the *Shastras* again that inculcate obedience without an eye to the fruit thereof. He who thinks not of the right gets it, and he who thinks of it loses it. That is the rule of conduct I would like to place before you. If you follow it, I have no doubt that you will create a disciplined army of workers for *Swaraj*. After you have succeeded in raising such an army, no ruler dare ignore you. As it is, the gentleman who invited the next conference to South did so with considerable trepidation, lest a ruler should refuse permission to hold it. You have, therefore, to clear the atmosphere, and to raise your moral stature to such a degree that no one would want to refuse your request. I hope you will not misunderstand me. I am not asking you to do aught that you should not do, that may be calculated to injure your self-respect. Always insist on truth, and urge it with humility and

<sup>1</sup> See page 46.

grace. I am a journalist of long standing. In my own way, I claim to know my art well. For, I make it a point to write only one thing when there are a hundred things that I might write. Now, if I were to open the columns of *Young India* and *Navajivan* to all the controversial topics and complaints that are referred to me, that would be the surest way to lose the little reputation I have gained for these journals. And, punctilious though I am in the observance of this rule, I dare say I err on occasions. I would, therefore, ask such of you, as are journalists and publicists, to curb your pen and tongue. Exercise the strictest economy of words, but not of truth. Restrain your expression, but not the inner light, which should burn brighter with increasing restraint. Not will you thus fall a prey to weakness. Flattery and anger are the two sides of weakness, one the obverse, the other the reverse. The reverse—anger—is worse than the obverse—flattery. Only a weak man either resorts to flattery or tries to disguise his weakness under anger. Let no one flatter himself that his anger is an expression of his strength. Strength lies only in action and action is duty done. Those who have captivated the hearts of men are souls heroic and true, who have burnt their passions to cinders in the fire of restraint. For you also, therefore, who have the salvation of Kathiawad at heart, patience and restraint should be the watchwords. The king carries on his work by means of punitive sanctions. You will carry on your work with the sanction of sacrifice and love. Drench both the rulers and the ruled with the water of your sacrifice and love, so that you may convert Kathiawad into an Eden worthy for men and gods to behold. If I may bless you, that is my blessing. If I am not worthy to give you blessings, that is my prayer to God. Let the spinning-wheel be a symbol of your sacrifice and love for fellow-men.

## I CRY TO CONQUER

“Even if the whole world of *Shastris* were to be against me, I would proclaim from the house-tops that they are wrong in considering untouchability to be part of the Hindu religion.”

*Replying to an address presented by the Representative Assembly and handed to him by the Thakore Sahab of Rajkot in a massive gold-gilt costly casket of silver, Gandhiji said :*

As I entered the Darbargadh to-day, my memory went back to an incident of my childhood which happened on this very spot and which I have treasured all these years. It was customary in those days, on the occasion of a royal wedding, to send a deputation to bridal States, before the wedding took place. The sons of the minister would form part of the deputation. My father who was then minister, however, had made it a point never to send his boys on such occasions. At the time, which I am recalling to-day, deputations were to go to Kanpur and Dharampur. My father, of course, kept us back. My good mother, who was more worldly and did not want her children to be robbed of the prizes of the position, pressed my brother and me to go to the late Thakore Sahab and cry before him. When he asked us what we were after, we were to tell him that we wanted to go to Dharampur. We followed the advice and we were sent not to Dharampur, but Kanpur. To-day also I must cry to conquer. I shall cry not for name and fame or wealth and position. Fame, said the *Shastris* who blessed me, was ever a virgin, inasmuch as she failed to find a suitable match for her, and they wished that that coy damsel should at last wed with me. May she ever remain ‘in single blessedness.’ For, I am sure that were she to marry me, I would be undone. I cry not, therefore, for fame, but one or two things you have withheld from me.

I am thankful for all the kind things you have said

about me, and more for the kinder sentiment expressed by the Thakore Saheb. I wish I was worthy of them. I do not, for a moment, flatter myself with the belief that I am all I have been described to be. I am one of the people and want to continue as such. Let me pray that I may remain untouched by the honour you have done me.

Whilst, then, I thank you, I must register my complaint about one or two things. You have omitted all mention of them in the address, whether purposely or not I do not know. You have rightly mentioned truth and non-violence as my guiding principles. I would, indeed, be a lifeless corpse without those two life-principles. But I am surprised that you have studiously omitted all reference to the two things, pursuit of which is inseparable from the practice of truth and non-violence. I refer to *Khadi* and removal of untouchability. These two things are, in a manner, more important than Hindu-Muslim unity, for that unity is impossible without them. So long as we have not rid Hinduism of the stain of untouchability, it is impossible to achieve real Hindu-Muslim unity.

A very thoughtful Mussalman once told me that so long as there was untouchability in Hinduism, it was difficult for Mussalmans to entertain any regard for that faith or its followers. I have repeated times without number that an 'untouchable' community is unknown to the *Shastras*. The weaver and the scavenger are not classed as untouchables by the *Shastras*. I am both. My mother was certainly a scavenger inasmuch as she cleaned me when I was a child. But she did not, on that account, become an untouchable. Why, then, should a *Bhangi*, who renders similar necessary service, be regarded as untouchable? Even if the whole world of *Shastris* were to be against me, I would proclaim from the house-tops that they are wrong in considering untouchability to be part of the Hindu religion.

And, in this connection, I take leave to mention one thing that both pleased and pained me. I was glad to notice that the "*Shastris'* blessings" was the first item of

to-day's programme. But I wondered whether there was a false ring about them. Their praise meant endorsement of my work on untouchability. Did they approve of my activity about it or did they merely obey the presumed or declared will of the Thakore Saheb that they should bless me? The benediction rang untrue because of the omission in your address of my campaign against untouchability. I beseech you, Thakore Saheb, to be kind to them, to befriend the depressed people of your State, even as Rama of old befriended Shabari and Guha, both presumably untouchables. I ask you to ensure them admission to schools, temples and all public places.

I was distressed to find the boy scouts clad in foreign *Khaki*. I did expect that these at least would be clad in *Khadi*. If you have *Khadi* uniforms for your boy scouts and your police, you can relieve the misery of the poor, the untouchables and the indigent widow. I entreat you, therefore, Thakore Saheb and members of the Representatives' Assembly, to resolve to wear *Khadi* and to have *Khadi* uniforms for all the State employees. You have given me a rich casket. I have no strong room nor safe to keep it in. Nor have I men to keep charge of the strong room or the safe, if I had them. I have thus to hand over all such costly presents to friends like Jamnalal Bajaj to take care of them for public use. But I have room enough to store *Khadi* and I, therefore, beg *Khadi* of every one I meet. I would not hesitate to ask even Lord Reading to dress himself and his orderly in *Khadi*.

Your sword, worthy Ruler, is a mighty symbol. Your path is like your sword's edge, you may not depart by even a hair's breadth from the straight and narrow path of truth. It is an eternal reminder of the fact that in your State there should be not a single drunkard, and no impure man or woman. It is your duty to put strength where there is weakness, and cleanliness where there is dirt. Befriend the poor and the oppressed. Your sword is not meant for others' necks, it is meant for your own. You can tell your people that the moment you exceed the bounds of your authority, they may put you to the sword. I speak in these terms to you, as I owe a duty to

you, Thakore Saheb. Your father made my father an unconditional gift of some land. I have thus eaten your salt, and I should not be worth the salt, if I did not on this solemn occasion invite your attention to what are a Prince's obvious duties. The honour you have done me lays me under a deep debt of gratitude. I prize the relief of the poor and the oppressed and the untouchable more than all that honour. Tell me that you have introduced numerous spinning-wheels in your villages and schools, that you have introduced *Khadi* in all your departments, and that all your public institutions and places are thrown open to the untouchables, and I shall feel doubly honoured and in reverence bow down my head to you. May God bless you with strength to serve your people!

## KATHIAWAD CONFERENCE RESOLUTION

*"Ahimsa* is a constructive, not a destructive, force; founder of democracies, not subversive of Princes or States; achieves the assimilation of all that is best in the rulers and the ruled. In a word, it seeks to establish a bond between the two, sustained not by armed force but by affection."

I shall refer here only to one resolution which I drafted and moved, and with which I think I have served the Conference and Kathiawad. Here is the resolution :

"With a view to avoiding the possibility of any misunderstanding between the rulers and the ruled, and with a view to a fuller recognition of its own limitations, as also in confirmation of the custom which has been for some time in operation, this Conference resolves that it shall not pass any resolution condemning or criticizing an individual State."

The resolution is a result of my devotion to truth. I said that the Conference could not have been held in Porbandar but for an implicit understanding with H. H. the Maharana Saheb of Porbandar, and that it must continue to be held only under such condition for some time longer. This was a measure of the helplessness of the Conference—a helplessness which could not be remedied except by a candid public confession thereof. A patient can ill afford to conceal his disease. If he does so, he becomes his own enemy.

Two resolutions criticizing individual States were brought up before the Subjects Committee. I cannot say there was no occasion for them, but I saw that they were beyond the understood limitations of the Conference. The Subjects Committee rejected them. The Conference could not live long if it were to entertain such resolutions. And so I advised the Conference to confess its helplessness. It was a bitter dose for the Subjects Committee. It was no pleasure to me to tender the advice, but my duty and the duty of the Conference,



however painful, was clear to me. Some of the members disapproved of the resolution, but they accepted my advice out of their generosity and far-sightedness.

This added to my responsibility, for I know that I should hold myself principally to blame for any untoward result that may arise out of this. But I have no misgivings. Self-imposed restraint is always beneficial.

If the members of the Conference observe this resolution in thought, word and deed, it will enhance the capacity of the Conference to do the work within the scope defined by the resolution. Ruling Princes have been until now loath to permit the holding of the Conference in their States, for fear of its entertaining resolutions condemning or criticizing individual States. In the face of this difficulty, it were waste of energy to engage in the alluring but futile attempt to criticize the drawbacks of individual States, and then to plead want of time for less alluring constructive work, would be hypocritical. Now with the resolution, members can either set about the unexciting but essential work of reconstruction, or close their shop, and as no one likes to go into bankruptcy, the executive body of the Conference, let us hope, will do the things needful.

Let not the resolution be taken to mean a declaration on the part of the Conference that the administration of these States is beyond cavil, but it merely means that we have no power to-day to criticize a State in a conference held in another State. Nor does it mean that the wrongs of an individual State may not be discussed before the Subjects Committee. Indeed, a member may seek the advice of the Committee in all such cases. Only no such resolution can be passed by the Conference. The executive body of the Conference may open correspondence with the States concerned, may interview the Princes or their officials, and request them to redress the wrongs complained of, or in case the complaints in question are disproved, declare that they had no foundation. It is possible that responsible States will welcome this unobtrusive gentle procedure and may even use it as a shield and correct themselves.

This intervention on the part of the Conference presupposes ability, perseverance and discretion on the part of its executive. Let them not proceed on assumptions or presumptions. They must have confidence to melt the hearts of the Princes. This confidence arises out of a genuine desire to serve both the State and the subjects, and a recognition that the object of the Conference is not to end but mend these States. If the former is intended, the States are no place in which to hold the Conference.

*Ahimsa* is a constructive, not a destructive, force; founder of democracies, not subversive of Princes or States; achieves the assimilation of all that is best in the rulers and the ruled. In a word, it seeks to establish a bond between the two, sustained not by armed force but by affection. The modern tendencies are subversive, the ancient culture conserves all that is best. *Ahimsa* aims at the greatest good of all, *himsa* builds the prosperity of one on the destruction of another. Democracy is not always good, autocracy is not always bad. Both have their uses for a Conference that seeks to reach its goal through truth and non-violence.

The field of work that is open to the Conference is vast. There is *Khadi*, there is untouchability, there is temperance work, also social reform, water storage for years of draught, planting trees, and many other things.

These, indeed, need the co-operation of Princes, but more the co-operation of their servants. These are drawn from the articulate section of the people, and unless they realize their duty, unless they make up their minds to interest themselves in public service fearlessly, no reform is possible. The effort of the Conference will, therefore, primarily be among the people themselves. For, people are the roots, the State is the fruit. If the roots are sweet, the fruits are bound to be sweet.

The subjects of each State can have their own Conference in their respective States and they may certainly criticize their respective administrations with due restraint. But this also can be built on a foundation of constructive work.

This needs selfless, fearless workers. Have you got them? Let those that are available plod on ceaselessly and patiently.

So much for the people. If the Princes will only understand, the resolution increases their responsibility. Many of them boycott the Conference for fear of criticism or condemnation. But now, I submit, it behoves them to welcome this resolution, appreciate the wisdom and good-will of the Conference, and satisfy it by using it as a bridge between themselves and the people. From the evidence before me I cannot say that all the administration of all the Kathiawad States is beyond cavil. Some of them, I hear, have grievously erred. Let them recognize the signs of the times. The cataclysm that is sweeping over the earth to-day, and which threatens India too, is a great sign. As a chaotic force it is pernicious, but it has, at its back, a noble object. The world, though not itself virtuous, pays an unconscious homage to virtue. It is tired of autocratic tyrannies, it is impatient of them. In its impatience, it forgets that the remedy that it seeks to employ is worse than the disease; but it desires reform, it desires the reign of equity and justice. Votaries of truth and *ahimsa* like myself are convinced that that way equity and justice do not lie. But they are no less convinced that unless the men in power take the warning, they are doomed. Let the ruling Princes beware. Let them not choose the way to moral bankruptcy. The unswerving faith that India will not go that way sustains me. May the ruling Princes not falsify that faith!

## A KATHIAWADI'S WAIL

"I disclaim any undue partiality for the States. At the same time I owe them no grudge; I do not desire their destruction. There is an abundant scope for reform in them which it should not be impossible to effect to-day. But it is my firm belief that it is impossible to reform the States in the true sense while India is in bondage."

An enraged Kathiawadi youth writes :

"I must painfully tell you that you have put us in a very awkward fix by sealing our lips, and unless you release us from this disability, you will unman us altogether. Even the restrictions imposed by Sjt. Mansukhlal, which you decried, were far more liberal than the disabilities that you have now imposed. For, whereas the former, at least, permitted people to criticize individual States in cases of 'flagrant injustice' you have deprived them even of that right. This is intolerable. Is it not rather curious that whereas in British India the slightest wrong is enough to make you flare up in righteous indignation, you won't allow even a single condemnatory syllable to be uttered against any individual State, though it might perpetrate the worst tyranny on its innocent *ryots*? It is time that you reconsidered your self-denying ordinance. And if you cannot withdraw it altogether, you should at least revise it to the extent of restoring the liberty to protest against cases of 'flagrant injustice.' Remember, at Bhavnagar, you undertook to obtain a redress of our grievances. Now that you have been disappointed in your efforts, does it not become your sacred duty to ventilate those questions before the public? But that duty you have not discharged yet and have prevented others from discharging. That is why we are to-day ground down by oppression. Freedom of public discussion is our sacred and inalienable right and you ought to teach the Kathiawad public to exercise that right. But you are doing just the reverse and by your curious silence are in fact conniving at the wrong. In moments of despair, I am tempted to charge you with showing an undue partiality towards the States. It is time that you escaped from the atmosphere of unreality created around you by the Kathiawad diplomats, and turned the battery of your righteous indignation to the 'flagrant wrongs' that lie beyond it, and give the same liberty to others. Won't you remember and make good the promise you made at Bhavnagar?"

The Kathiawadi friend in question has an undoubted right to write to me as he has done, just as it is my duty to give a patient hearing to what the youth might have to say. Every duty performed confers upon one certain rights, whilst the exercise of every right carries with it certain corresponding obligations. And so the never-ending cycle of duty and right goes ceaselessly on. In the present case, for instance, the Kathiawadi youth began by exercising his right to pour forth his grief to me. I discharge my duty by giving him a patient hearing, with the result that the right to speak out my mind to the Kathiawadi youth has now accrued to me, and it is the duty of the Kathiawadi youth in question to hear and try inwardly to digest and assimilate what I might have to say.

I very well remember the promise I made at Bhavnagar. I have not yet lost hope. My efforts still continue, but their result is not in my hands, but in the hands of God who alone controls results. Nor is it necessary that my efforts in this direction should be before the public or involve my personally meeting the rulers in question. They may or may not even be direct, indeed, they may begin and end with a heart-felt prayer. Let no one laugh at this. I want to enter into no special pleading on my behalf. I mention this method of work because it is part and parcel of my life. For years together in South Africa, my efforts consisted practically only in waiting and prayer, and it is my firm conviction that that period of silent prayer was the most fruitful for that work. It constituted the bedrock on which whatever little was accomplished was based. Even to-day, perhaps, I may be said to be doing nothing tangible for the attainment of Hindu-Muslim unity, yet it is my claim that I am striving for it ceaselessly. Even so, in the matter of the Indian States, I am always on the look out for an opportunity. Opportunities have always come to me for the waiting and praying. Let no one, therefore, be led away to think that I have ceased to concern myself about the question of the Indian States or to do anything in that behalf.

But I know that the impatient reader can judge my efforts only in the light of concrete tangible results. He may, therefore, well feel angry if he fails to understand my way of doing things. I must hold my soul in patience,

I may not here enter into a discussion of Mansukhlal's restrictions. My opinion, in that respect, has not undergone the least change. But circumstances alter cases. I have simply laid down the indispensable conditions for the holding of conferences in the Indian States. If such conferences must be held at all, without observing these restrictions, I maintain that it is not possible as yet to hold conferences within the boundaries of the States.

But these restrictions apply to conferences only, they do not affect individual action. Any one in his individual capacity has always perfect liberty to criticize as much as he likes any Indian Prince, subject only to the measure of his own strength and considerations of sobriety and commonsense.

Again, I have never suggested that individual rulers of Indian States may never be criticized or that conferences, untrammelled by any restrictions, may not be held at all. On the contrary, I hold that there is nothing improper in holding, in British territory, conferences at which individual States may be freely criticized. There is also the undoubted right of the subjects of any State to criticize the administration of that State within its own border. That this right is not fully exercised to-day is a matter of deep sorrow.

It is true that personally I do not, through *Navajivan* or otherwise, criticize individual rulers. But that is a different matter altogether. I claim to be a practical man. I have got a fair measure of my strength and I know how to conserve it. I have deliberately cultivated the habit of avoiding a useless or superfluous word. I do not hesitate unsparingly to denounce all wrongs, great and small, in British territory because I know that such denunciation is backed by consciousness of potential strength. In the case of the States, though I am not unaware of the terrible things going on in some of them, I have no strength to back my exposure of the wrongs.

I disclaim any undue partiality for the States. At the same time I owe them no grudge; I do not desire their destruction. There is an abundant scope for reform in them which it should not be impossible to effect to-day. But it is my firm belief that it is impossible to reform the States in the true sense while India is in bondage. It may be possible to obtain redress here and there in cases of flagrant injustice by leading a crusade against it. But such tinkering does not interest me. It gives me no satisfaction. I am, therefore, to-day concentrating all my energy on the root evil. If I can effectively touch the root, the branches will in time drop down of their own accord. Whereas, on the contrary, to divert public attention from the root evil and mobilize it against the branch evils in the States, would mean lending an additional lease of life to the former. That is a risk that I, for one, am not prepared to run.

Let no one, however, understand me to mean from this that no action whatsoever is at present possible in the case of the States. I shall repeat here what I have already said. Wherever the subjects of States are ready for it, they can and ought to organize an agitation against maladministration in that State, especially if they have the strength to make use of the never-failing weapon of *satyagraha*. But it is a matter of deep sorrow to me that to-day the ruled are often tools in the hands of wicked rulers. Grinding oppression has rendered the people nerveless. No one has yet been able to save goats from the clutches of tigers. The goats' emancipation would be possible only if one could envisage the goat-world itself giving birth to its would-be emancipator. Though reduced to the position of the goat man is to-day in this country, especially in the States, all hope is not lost for him. He belongs to a higher species. Strength lies dormant in the weak. If they find an environment in which bipeds exactly like them exhibit strength, it is not unlikely that they will catch the infection. Bardoli was only a modest fore-runner—a beam from the powerful sun. If Bardoli exhibited the full strength and qualifications necessary for full *satyagraha*, its example would

spread throughout the length and breadth of the land, and we should find ourselves, including the people of the States, a free nation.



## WHAT OF STATES PEOPLE ?

“A federation of the people and the Princes will have meaning only when the Princes will stoop to conquer, will stoop to the level of their people, just as we ask the Englishmen to descend from the heights of Simla to the plains.”

*Speaking at the Subjects Committee of the Karachi Congress on Gandhi-Irwin Pact, Gandhiji referred to the rights of States subjects under Federation as follows :*

I will say one or two words with reference to what has been left out in the resolution before you. One thing that has been left out is the Federation. What is the meaning of the word ‘Federation’? Is it a Federation between the Princes or the States on the one hand, and the provinces put together on the other? What are the conditions under which that Federation is to take place, we do not know at all. But the Princes have taken up one position, *viz.*, that there shall be no intervention on the part of the Federal Government in their internal affairs. All I have suggested in connection with the Federation is that they should acknowledge that the fundamental rights of the people of the States should be the same as those of the citizens in what is called British India. If those rights are guaranteed under the Federal Constitution, then, there should be naturally some federal institution to protect those rights, *i.e.*, a Federal Supreme Court or whatever you might like to call it, to which an appeal would lie. I hope the Princes will, of their own accord, recognize these two things and also allow representation for the subjects of the States. To do this would possibly be somewhat of a derogation from the sovereignty which the Princes enjoy. But if they would be part of the Federation in which the larger part is to be governed by a spirit of absolute democracy, it is up to them to part with some of their power and that of their own accord

and free will. I am hoping that some such thing would happen and that is why you find no mention made of Federation in this resolution.

*Speaking in Hindi, he put the same thing in a different way :*

I have expressed my views in this matter in my statement to the Press immediately after the Settlement. The Princes are naturally touchy, and we should do nothing to touch them on the raw, if we can help it. We may only make it clear to them that a Federation of the people and Princes will have meaning only when the Princes will stoop to conquer, will stoop to the level of their people, just as we ask the Englishmen to descend from the heights of Simla to the plains. But we do not want to give them any notice of this. We will trust them to conform to the spirit of the times, and I am sure that if we succeed in getting everything else, the Princes will offer no difficulty.

## PRINCES AND FEDERATION

“If one can divide a living body into two parts, you may divide India into two parts. It has lived as one country from time immemorial, and no artificial boundary can possibly divide it.”

*In his speech delivered on Legislatures at the Federal Structure Committee of the Second Round Table Conference, London, Gandhiji referred to the Prince's Problem as follows :*

With reference to sub-head (i), whilst my sympathies, broadly speaking, are with Dr. Ambedkar, my reason is wholly with Mr. Gavin Jones and Sir Sultan Ahmad. If we were a homogeneous sub-committee, whose members were entitled to vote and come to a conclusion, I should, then, sail a very long distance with Dr. Ambedkar, but such is not our position. We are an ill-assorted group, each member of which is perfectly independent, and is entitled to give his or her views. In that state we have no right, in my humble opinion, to say to the States what they shall do and what they shall not do. Those States have very generously come to our assistance and said that they would federate with us, and perhaps part with some of their rights which they might otherwise have held exclusively. In that condition, I could not but endorse the opinion given by Sir Sultan Ahmad, which was perhaps emphasized by Mr. Gavin Jones, that the utmost that we can do is to plead with the States and show them our own difficulties; but at the same time I feel that we have to recognize their special difficulties also.

Therefore, I can only venture a suggestion or two to the great Princes for their sympathetic consideration, and I would urge this,—being a man of the people, from the people, and endeavouring to represent the lowest classes of society—I would urge upon them the advisability of finding a place for themselves also in any scheme that they may evolve and present for the accept-

ance of this sub-committee. I feel, and I know, that they have the interests of their subjects at heart. I know that they claim jealously to guard their interests. But they will, if all goes well, more and more come in contact with popular India, if I may so call British India, and they will want to make common cause with the inhabitants of that India, as the people of that India would want to make common cause with the India of the Princes. After all, there is no vital, real division between these two Indias. If one can divide a living body into two parts, you may divide India into two parts. It has lived as one country from time immemorial, and no artificial boundary can possibly divide it. The Princes, be it said to their credit, when they declared themselves frankly and courageously in favour of Federation, claimed also to be of the same blood with us, our own kith and kin. How could they do otherwise? There is no difference between them and us except that we are common people and they are, God has made them, noblemen, princes. I wish them well; I wish them all prosperity; and I also pray that their prosperity and their welfare may be utilized for the advancement of their own dear people, their own subjects.

Beyond this I will not go, I cannot go. I can only make an appeal to them. It is open to them, as we know, either to come into the Federation or not to come into it. It is up to us to make it easy for them to come into the Federation. It is up to them to make it easy for us to welcome them with open arms.

Without that spirit of give and take, I know that we shall not be able to come to any definite scheme of Federation, or, if we do, we shall ultimately quarrel and break up. Therefore, I would rather that we did not embark upon any federal scheme than that we should do so without our full hearts in the thing. If we do so, we should do so whole-heartedly.

*Speaking at the Plenary Session of the Conference, Gandhiji said:*

I want to say one word about the Princes, and I shall have done. I have not said much about the Princes, nor

do I intend to say much to-night about the Princes, but I should be wronging them and should be wronging the Congress if I did not register my claim, not with the Round Table Conference but with the Princes. It is open to the Princes to give their terms on which they will join the Federation. I have appealed to them to make the path easy for those who inhabit the other part of India, and, therefore, I can only make these suggestions for their favourable consideration, for their earnest consideration. I think that if they accepted, no matter what they are, but some fundamental rights as the common property of all India, and if they accepted that position and allowed those rights to be tested by the Court, which will be again of their own creation, and if they introduced elements—only elements—of representation on behalf of their subjects, I think that they would have gone a long way to conciliate their subjects. They would have gone a long way to show to the world and to show to the whole of India that they are also fired with a democratic spirit, that they do not want to remain undiluted autocrats, but that they want to become constitutional monarchs even as King George of Great Britain is.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Q. Why did you say nothing about the subjects of the Native States at the Conference? I am afraid, you have sacrificed their interests.

A. Well, those people did not expect me to make wordy declarations before the R. T. C., but they certainly expect me to place certain things before the Princes, which I have done. There would be time to criticize my action when it fails. I must be permitted to handle things after my own fashion. And it is not the R. T. C. that is going to give me what I want for the subjects of the States. I have to take it from the Princes. Similar is the question of the Hindu-Muslim unity. I would bend my knee before Mussalmans and ask from them what I want, but I could not do it across the Round Table. You must know that I am a skilled advocate and, after all, if I fail, you can take away the brief from me. *Young India* : Oct. 15, 1931.

## SOME DOUBTS ANSWERED

"I have certainly not lost hope that the Princes will deem it a pride to become real trustees of their people. I do not seek to destroy their status. I believe in the conversion of individuals and societies."

*Shri N. C. Kelkar, President, All-India States' People Conference, wrote to Gandhiji the following letter dated June 22, 1934 :*

"The people in the Indian States desire to ascertain your individual opinion on certain matters affecting themselves, so that we may move the Congress to consider, in the light of your opinion, the desirability of defining its policy on certain questions more precisely than at present, and modifying it somewhat on certain others.

"The first question that we would bring to your notice in this connection is the necessity of the Congress taking up for solution problems pertaining to the States. The Congress has now given up its traditional policy of "keeping itself unspotted" from the States. It recruits members in the States and brings them under the control of its district and provincial committees. The accession of strength that it has thus received from the States, is by no means negligible; nor are these members sleeping partners in the Congress activities, although these activities concern mostly British India alone. On the other hand, even in such movements as civil disobedience, they have proved good comrades-in-arms and have cheerfully borne their share of the burden, realizing that British India and Indian India are essentially one and indivisible, and that the concerns of one are necessarily the concerns of the other also.

"We think that time has now arrived for the Congress to respond to this spirit of good comradeship, exhibited by the States' people by putting all its weight and prestige behind their efforts at self-emancipation. At the Madras (1927) and Calcutta (1928) sessions, the Congress no doubt pleaded for the establishment of democratic *Swaraj* in the Indian States and extended its sympathy to the inhabitants thereof. The Calcutta resolution is well worth quoting here *in extenso* :

"This Congress urges on the ruling Princes of the Indian States to introduce responsible government based on representative

institutions in the States, and to issue immediately proclamations or enact laws guaranteeing elementary and fundamental rights of citizenship such as rights of association, free speech, free press and security of person and property.

'This Congress further assures the people of the Indian States of its sympathy with and support in their legitimate and peaceful struggle for the attainment of full responsible government in the States.'

"We have no doubt that a similar resolution will be reiterated at the sessions that will be held hereafter, but may we not hope that the Congressmen in British India will lend active help to the people in the Indian States in achieving political freedom, even as the Congressmen in Indian India gave a measure of help to British Indians in their attempts to realize their destiny? Of the two, British Indians are much the more advanced, but in fact help has flowed far more from the States' people to British Indians than from British Indians to the States' people. Do you not think it desirable to advise British Indians, in the name of the Congress, to support actively, even by undergoing suffering if necessary, all legitimate movements for the establishment of popular government in the Indian States under the aegis of their rulers? Such comradeship shown on both sides, it appears to us, will cement the two Indias far more firmly than any formal federation can.

"Another question, of even greater urgency, on which the Congress must determine its policy, is its attitude towards those parts of the White Paper scheme which relate to the Indian States. The authorities of the Congress have declared the scheme to be unacceptable because it does not satisfy the aspirations of the Indian people. May we say that the provisions concerning the States are far from acceptable to the States' people, and may we hope that the actual acceptance or otherwise of these provisions will be made to depend upon their wishes? The future constitution of India, which, according to the Congress intentions, is to take the place of the White Paper constitution, will be based upon the principle of self-determination given effect to by a Constituent Assembly. Is it implied that the federal scheme that will be evolved by this Assembly will be the result of an agreement between the people in British India on the one hand, and those in the Indian States on the other?

"While on this subject, it would be well to refer to the apprehensions that have arisen in the mind of the Indian States' people by some passages in your speeches at the Round Table Conference. You pleaded earnestly in this Conference with the rulers of the Indian States for allowing the States' representatives in the federal legislature, to be chosen by election and for allowing the fundamental rights of the States' people to be written into the federal constitution and placed under the protection of the Federal Court.

But your pleadings on this occasion have given rise to an impression that if the Princes did not agree, as they did not and do not agree, you would accept a constitution in which provisions of the kind that you suggested did not find a place. If this impression is well founded, we cannot help saying, and saying it straight out, that you have done a grave wrong to the States' people. If you think that nomination by the Princes, for instance, must be acquiesced in, if necessary, in the existing circumstances, we will only beg you to refer the matter to the States' people themselves, in order to ascertain what their wishes are in this respect. The right of self-determination of the Indian States' people is no less sacred than that of British Indians.

"But it has been explained to us that in expressing your views in favour of the election of the States' representatives and the protection of the fundamental rights of the States' people in the way you did, you wished it to be understood by the rulers of the States that if they did not agree to do what you urged upon them, you would not admit them into the Federation. You meant these to be essential conditions of Federation, but you did not express yourself in this categorical manner only because, at the time you spoke, Federation was still shrouded in uncertainty. If this be your meaning, we would entreat you to make it clear beyond the possibility of doubt, for we know that the rulers of the States are putting a different interpretation upon what you said. They are representing that you are ready to put up with nomination by the Princes, for instance, for an indefinite length of time. It is necessary that your meaning should be made plain, for the Swarajist Conference at Ranchi made it known that their party (which is now only a wing of the Congress) would follow the lines of your speeches at the R. T. C. in framing the future constitution. Since, in the final determination of the Congress policy on these points, your personal view plays such a decisive part, we are anxious to know whether election of the States' people and a Declaration of Rights in their interest are, in your opinion, merely desirable features of a Federation or essential conditions thereof. There are various other matters connected with the federal constitution which require careful consideration on the part of the Congress, but we do not wish to trouble you with them at the present moment. We would only beg you to give us an unequivocal statement of your views on the points raised in this letter."

*Replying to the above on July 2, 1934, Gandhiji wrote :*

The unusual demand upon my time is the excuse for delay in replying to your letter of 22nd June last.

Instead of dealing directly with the points raised by you, I propose to define my own policy regarding the



Indian States.

The policy of non-interference in the affairs of the States that the Congress has followed is wise and sound.

The States are independent entities under the British law. That part of India which is described as British has no more power to shape the policy of the States than it has (say) that of Afghanistan or Ceylon.

I wish it were otherwise, but I recognize my impotence in the matter. India of the States is undoubtedly an integral part of geographical India. But that carries us no further than where we stand to-day. Portuguese and French India are also an integral part of geographical India, but we are powerless to shape the course of events there.

We enrol members from the States in the Congress. We receive considerable assistance from them. It is not want of appreciation or will that compels our non-interference. It is our helplessness.

It is my conviction that any attempt on the part of the Congress at interference can only damage the cause of the people in the States.

But there is nothing to prevent us from urging the States to adopt a certain policy.

I am of opinion that whatever we are able to accomplish in British India is bound to affect the States.

I would like the States to grant autonomy to their subjects and would like the Princes to regard themselves as, and be in fact, trustees for the people over whom they rule, drawing for themselves only a small and definite percentage of the income. I have certainly not lost hope that the Princes will deem it a pride to become real trustees of their people. I do not seek to destroy their status. I believe in the conversion of individuals and societies.

What I said at the Round Table was in the nature of an appeal made to the Princes. It certainly did not imply that, whether they listened to the appeal or not, the Congress would enter the Federation. I had no authority to bind the Congress to any such thing. The Congress entering the Federation had to depend upon many other circumstances beyond the attitude of the Princes. If ever

Federation comes, it will surely depend upon mutual adjustment.

I hope I have covered all the points you have raised. If I have not, please write to me again. I have written this under great pressure of work.

## ‘MATTERS OF AGREEMENT’

“I am as impatient for radical reform in the States as any one can be. But I admit that my impatience is conditioned by my patent helplessness.”

*In his letter to Shri Amritlal Seth from Benarès on July 30, 1934, Gandhiji wrote:*

I have read and re-read my letter to Shri Kelkar and other papers put by you before me. I have had long enough talks with you. With the faculty for detachment, which I fancy I possess, I have endeavoured to understand your view-point. I have carefully read the draft letter you have prepared at my instance. Here is my conclusion.

Our view-points are different. Therefore, there seems to be no meeting-ground. You have evidently despaired of the reformation of the States. I strive for radical reformation of the States and believe in its possibility. Therefore, our methods of approach must remain different. Let us, therefore, agree to differ as to the method of approach.

The points of agreement between us seem to me to be these :

I detest corruption, high-handedness, unbridled autocracy as much as you or anybody else can. But these are no monopoly of the Princes.

I am, perhaps, as well aware of the general abuses in the States as you and others are.

I am as impatient for radical reform in the States as any one can be. But I admit that my impatience is conditioned by my, or, if you will, our, patent helplessness.

Between the subjects of the States and of British India, there is undoubtedly conscious identity of interests. The Princes, as a class, unfortunately do not recognize it. They seem to believe in water-tight compartments. In

this, they have the protection of British law and British arms.

Congress Committees do, and are entitled to, enlist members who are subjects of the States even as you and I are. Congress Committees can undoubtedly be formed in the States wherever circumstances permit. Indeed, it is common knowledge that there are many such in several States.

I have no doubt that the list of items of agreement can be indefinitely prolonged. I have only given a sample.

You and our friends can command my services in matters of agreement. If you and they will try the experiment in this direction, we shall probably forget the differences.

## CONFEDERATION OF SMALL STATES

"They (smaller States) will soon realize that their safety lies in some kind of confederation and sharing of power with the people. The chief thing is a dispassionate representation of the problem and creation of public opinion that cannot be answered or opposed."

"May I take the liberty of writing to you with a view to draw your attention to the problem of Kathiawad States? A close study of the States comprising the Western India Agency will convince any one that the real problem of Kathiawad is not that of responsible government in individual States. That, in fact, is a demand very much beyond the ken of economic possibility. None of these States, with the exception of five or six, can afford to be genuine, separate, self-governing units. Economic considerations apart, their geographical contiguity, and cultural and linguistic unity positively point towards the desirability of grouping them all administratively. A confederation of these States alone can bring their people on a par with the people of Bombay Province or, for that matter, any other province in British India.

"As to the fear that the Princes might strongly dislike such a move, it might be said that one cannot hope to go through any scheme of reform embodying real transference of power to the people without being confronted by the most dogged opposition from those quarters. And when at all events a fight (of course, a non-violent one) has got to be waged against that opposition, it is only prudent and politic on our part to fight on an issue which should be our main and ultimate demand. Whatever our immediate and minimum demands, the final objective must not be lost sight of. And may I suggest in the case of Kathiawad, as also some three-fourths of the States in India, the final goal of political reformers must be a confederation on the lines roughly foreshadowed in the appended printed articles?

"I hope you will see that this idea, though by no means new or original, deserves to be popularized. For, collective agitation by a group or cluster of States in favour of confederation, has certain obvious advantages which agitation for reform in a single State cannot have. How much I wish you had worked for the propagation of this idea while you were actively engaged in the Rajkot struggle. Even now, one word of support from you—of course, only if you generally agree with this view—will place this idea on a sound footing."

This important letter was received by me in Abbottabad. The articles appended are cuttings from *The Tribune* of Lahore, specially dealing with the problem. The articles contain an interesting analysis of the Kathiawad States and corroborative quotations from the Butler Committee's Report and a recent pronouncement by the Viceroy. For the moment, I must content myself with heartily supporting the proposal. I do not share the fear of my correspondent about much opposition from the smaller States, if they are sympathetically approached. They will soon realize that their safety lies in some kind of confederation and sharing of power with the people. The chief thing is a dispassionate representation of the problem and creation of public opinion that cannot be answered or opposed.

## PLEA FOR VOLUNTARY FEDERATION

“If the Kathiawad States would voluntarily federate, say, for water, forests and roads, purely for saving life, there would be no danger of a water famine such as threatens that cluster of States.”

Imposed Federation is likely to divide India more than it is to-day. It would be a great step if the British Government were to declare that they would not impose their federal structure on India. The Viceroy seems to be acting in that fashion, if he is not saying so. If my surmise is correct, I suggest that a clear declaration will add grace to his action and will probably pave the way for real Federation and, therefore, real unity. That Federation can, naturally, never be of the Government of India Act brand. Whatever it is, it must be a product of the free choice of all India.

But before that political and legalized Federation of free choice comes, there should be voluntary Federation of parts, to begin with, if not of the whole. This reflection arises from famine conditions to-day in parts of lesser Gujarat and the whole of Kathiawad. I have received angry protests from correspondents drawing my attention to what they have termed the heartless policy of the Bombay Government in prohibiting the movement of fodder and grain. I could not believe my correspondents. I knew that the Sardar was moving heaven and earth to cope with the distress, both in Gujarat and Kathiawad. But, in order to make assurance doubly sure, I wired to the Prime Minister. Immediately on the same day came the following answer :

“Removal of fodder from six districts not permitted without the permission of Collector as the necessities of our Province must be first considered. Excess will be permitted to be removed.”

The wire was followed by a letter enclosing a copy

of the Bill about to be introduced in the Bombay Assembly. It simply controls the movement and prices of grain and fodder during times of famine or scarcity. This is no policy of prohibition, but it is one of control over and regulation of the movement of fodder and grain so as to prevent hoarding in speculators' hands or disposal to the extent of starving the places where it is grown and stored. The Premier's letter contemplates collection of grain and fodder from available sources outside the Province and its distribution in famine areas, including Kathiawad. The Bombay measure I consider not only to be necessary but conducive to the interest as well of the whole of the States' part of the Province, as of the British part. I call it an act of voluntary Federation. The reader must not quarrel with the stretch of the meaning of the word.

This little act introduces the reader to what can become a big act of voluntary Federation. I reproduced the other day a letter from a correspondent suggesting a Federation of the Kathiawad States in many matters of common interest. The correspondent's ultimate aim was political Federation. What I contemplate has nothing to do with politics. My present and ultimate aim here is purely humanitarian.

If the Kathiawad States would voluntarily federate, say, for water, forests and roads, purely for saving life, there would be no danger of a water famine such as threatens that cluster of States. There are States rich enough who can provide water for the whole of Kathiawad. I know it cannot be done in a day. But the dog in the manger policy, followed in Kathiawad, has made impossible any scheme of big water-works. Kathiawad has fairly good rivers and hills. There is no limit to the possibility of artesian wells. If only all the States will combine, and the rich ones will use their riches for the common good, they will be saved the awful prospect of people and cattle having to die of thirst. I have faith that it is possible for Kathiawad to ensure a proper supply of water even in dry years. But no common water-works will answer the purpose for all time unless there is a long-view scheme of afforestation. There are practically no



forests in Kathiavad. The Princes and the people have to combine to plant trees on an extensive scale. This cannot be done unless the States and the people regard the whole of Kathiavad as their joint and common land, and have wisdom enough to desire to live on their land without the perpetual dread of having to die of thirst when the god of rain stops supplies.

## KATHIAWAD STATES

"The extracts should interest both the Princes and the people of Kathiawad. The writer is evidently a friend of the States. He desires reform, not destruction. His scheme is worthy of serious consideration by all who are interested in the question of the administration of the States."

The other day I referred to the series of articles in *The Tribune*, suggesting a scheme of confederation of States with special reference to Kathiawad. I had kept the cuttings containing the articles by R. L. H. for the purpose of giving, when the pressure on *Harijan* columns admitted it, a reproduction of the most important extracts from the articles which appeared in *The Tribune* dated 5th and 7th July. The extracts, published elsewhere in this issue, should interest both the Princes and the people of Kathiawad. The writer is evidently a friend of the States. He desires reform, not destruction. His scheme is worthy of serious consideration by all who are interested in the question of the administration of the States.

### THE EXTRACTS

The Western India States Agency, comprising all the 284 States in Kathiawad, is, numerically, by far the biggest Agency under the administrative control of the Political Department. The Kathiawad States, between themselves, account for just half the number of States in India, the total being computed at 562. These States present the greatest possible variety in size and government. At one end of the scale are Cutch with an area of 8250 square miles and Bhavnagar with an annual income of about Rs. 15 million; at the other end of the scale are petty estates or minute holdings amounting in extent to a few acres only. As many as 46 States in this Agency have an area of two or less than two square miles each. Eight of them, namely Bodaneness, Gandhol, Morchopra, Panchabda, Samadhiala, Chabbadia, Sanala, Sataneness and Vangadhra are just over half a mile each in area. Yet none of these is the smallest State in Kathiawad! That distinction goes to Vejaneness which has an area of 0.29

square mile, a population of 206 souls and an income of Rs. 500 a year. There is nothing in the annals of the Indian States—Gujarat States excepted—which can beat this record. This is not all. Even these tiny principalities do not seem to be indivisible units. Some of them are claimed by more than one “sovereign,” officially described as share-holder. Thus Dahida, with an area of two square miles, has six share-holders, and Godhula and Khujadia Dosaji, being one square mile each in extent, have two share-holders each; while Sanala, 0.51 in area, is put against two share-holders. Such instances can be easily multiplied up to thirty to forty. Sir George Macmunn must have had these statelets in mind while writing his famous book *The Indian States and Princes*. In the very first chapter, he says: “The Ruling Princes of India number between five and six hundred, and their principalities vary from that of the Nizam, as large as a third of France, to others no larger than Battersea Park.”

As mentioned above, against this staggering statistics, we have also a number of bigger and prosperous States with developed resources and generally an efficient administration. In all, there are 16 salute States in the Agency. These are: Bhavnagar, Cutch, Dhrangadhra, Dhrol, Gondal, Idar, Junagad, Limbdi, Morvi, Nawanagar, Palitana, Porbandar, Radhanpur, Rajkot, Wadhwan and Wankaner. These are also the principal States of the group, considering their size, population and income. Only five of them, however, have an income of Rs. 50 lakhs or more, *viz.*, Bhavnagar, Gondal, Junagad, Morvi and Nawanagar. Bhavnagar, Cutch and Junagad are the only States with populations slightly above half a million in each case, the rest of them having anything between 28,000 to 450,000 inhabitants. Considering their small areas, it may be said that some of these States are among the richest in India. Bhavnagar, for example, with an area of only 2,961 square miles, has an income of Rs. 1,47,76,273. There is no other State in India, approximating to this size, which has such a high income. Cochin in the south alone appears to be a rival with 1,489 square miles of area and an income of about Rs. 90,00,000. Similarly, there is hardly any State in India, Rampur excepted, which comes up to the standard of Morvi which, with an area of 822 square miles, has an income of Rs. 56,39,000. The same is more or less true of Junagad, Nawanagar and Gondal.

The real demand of the States' subjects, it must be presumed, is self-government or responsible government and not merely good government. Nothing short of extensive democratization of the administrative machinery is likely to satisfy them. As democratization must of necessity involve certain financial commitments, it is neither helpful nor politic to demand it from rulers of States whose annual income is less than, say, Rs. 50 lakhs. Joint administration is, therefore, the only alternative to the existing arrangement for such States.

Joint administration for small States is no novel or visionary suggestion. His Excellency the Viceroy himself, than whom none can claim to be more solicitous for the welfare of the Princes, is responsible for propagating this view. The germs of this theory, however, are traceable in the Butler Committee Report 1928-29. Dealing with the classification of States, the Report says :

"The petty States of Kathiawad and Gujarat, numbering 286 of the total of 327 in the third class, are organized in groups called *thanas* under officers appointed by local representatives of the Paramount Power, who exercise various kinds and degrees of criminal, revenue and civil jurisdiction. As the cost of administration rises, the States find it necessary to distribute it over larger areas by appointing officials to work for several States. Already there is talk in some of the larger States in Kathiawad of appointing a High Court with powers over a group of such States."

Lord Linlithgow, however, has given this idea a definite shape, and, indeed, during the last six months he has hardly spoken but once about the States' problem without laying emphasis on the possibility and advisability of grouping. His Excellency's views on this question may be gathered from the following extract from his address delivered on the occasion of inaugurating the session of the Chamber of Princes in March last :

"In no case is the need for co-operation and combination more patent, more pronounced and more immediate than in the case of the smaller States. Those States whose resources are so limited as virtually to preclude them individually from providing for the requirements of their people in accordance with modern standard, have, indeed, no other practical alternative before them. I would take this opportunity to impress upon the Rulers of such States, with all the emphasis at my command, the wisdom of taking the earliest possible steps to combine with their neighbours in the matter of administrative services so far as this is practicable."

Though the principle of combination enunciated by the Viceroy can apply to smaller States all over India, it is particularly suitable in the case of Kathiawad States. One peculiar feature of these States is that, unlike their neighbours, the Gujarat States or the Central India States, they are geographically one compact province. The whole of this peninsula jutting into the Arabian Sea is almost entirely under Indian rule. There is no British territory cutting across or penetrating into this hoof-like area linked with Cutch by land and sea. That is why the Kathiawad cluster of States does not present a "fantastic jig-saw puzzle picture," as so many other clusters of States do. This geographical continuity is a great asset to these States. The process of combination or grouping or, to be a little bolder, of confederation, is immensely facilitated by this continuity. The total area of all these States is just over 40,000 square miles and the total popula-

tion is 42,29,494. The total annual income is estimated at about Rs. six crores.

During the last three months, the Kathiawad Princes have met a number of times and at their last conference in May they decided to hold monthly conferences. Besides considering the Draft Instrument of Instructions to the Princes, they were reported to have discussed the feasibility of having a combined police force, common Excise, Medical, Public Health, Public Works and Forest Departments and a common High Court. It is not known what degree of success these negotiations have so far achieved. Nor has it ever been made clear how it is possible to have so many combined administrative departments without having something like a common legislature. It is so easy to see the futility of combined administration in these important spheres without providing for a combined legislature. For, the question arises, to whom will these common administrations be responsible? Certainly, not to all one score Princes and their Governments. You cannot earnestly be responsible to twenty authorities unless confusion is their aim and to bungle your wish—R. L. H.

## THE STATES RESOLUTION

"The best help that the Congress can render to-day is to destroy the delusion that it can actively help the Indian States. That will automatically mean that the States' people must learn to rely on themselves for all internal reforms."

The resolution on the attitude of the Congress regarding Indian States was one of the most important of the resolutions passed at Haripura.<sup>1</sup> It would have been better if the Subjects Committee had passed the resolution as it was adopted by the Working Committee at Wardha, but a slight modification had to be accepted in order to conciliate the members from the States. Even then these friends are far from being satisfied with it, and fail to appreciate the wisdom underlying the Congress attitude. One of these friends was at Secaon for a little while, specially to understand from Gandhiji his and the Congress attitude, and he went away so wholly satisfied that what Gandhiji told him may profitably be summarized here.

<sup>1</sup> *The following resolution was passed by the Congress at Haripura in February 1938 :*

"In view of the fact that owing to the growth of public life and the demand for freedom in Indian States, new problems are arising and new conflicts are taking place, the Congress lays down afresh its policy in regard to the States.

"The Congress stands for the same political, social and economic freedom in the States as in the rest of India, and considers the States as integral parts of India which cannot be separated. The *Purna Swaraj* or Complete Independence, which is the objective of the Congress, is for the whole of India inclusive of the States, for the integrity and unity of India must be maintained in freedom as it has been maintained in subjection. The only kind of Federation that can be acceptable to the Congress is one in which the States participate as free units, enjoying the same measure of democratic freedom as the rest of India. The Congress, therefore, stands for full responsible government and the guarantee of civil liberty in the States, and deplors

"The States resolution," said Gandhiji, "is a call to the States' people not to go to sleep, but to start work in right earnest. The Congress is deeply concerned about the welfare of Indian States, as the Congress resolution on the Federation should clearly show. We want the States' people to carry on ceaseless work in the States, but not in the name of the Congress. The use of the name of the Congress may expose the Congress to insult. If insult could result in good to the States' people, I would court it. But it is far from being so. The Congress cannot, in the nature of things, step into each and every Indian State and protect those who agitate there. It is better able to protect them by not allowing them to use its name. If the States' people have begun to understand

the present backward conditions and utter lack of freedom and suppression of civil liberties in many of these States.

"The Congress considers it its right and privilege to work for the attainment of this objective in the States. But, under existing circumstances, the Congress is not in a position to work effectively to this end within the States, and numerous limitations and restrictions, imposed by the rulers, or by British authority working through them, hamper its activities. The hope and assurance which its name and great prestige raise in the minds of the people of the States find no immediate fulfilment, and disillusion results. It is not in consonance with the dignity of the Congress to have local committees which cannot function effectively, or to tolerate indignity to the National Flag. The inability of the Congress to give protection or effective help when hopes have been raised, produces helplessness in the people of the States and hinders the development of their movement for freedom.

"In view of the different conditions prevailing in the States and the rest of India, the general policy of the Congress is often unsuited to the States and may result in preventing or hampering the natural growth of a freedom movement in a State. Such movements are likely to develop more rapidly and to have a broader basis, if they draw their strength from the people of the State, produce self-reliance in them, and are in tune with the conditions prevailing there, and do not rely on extraneous help and assistance or on the prestige of the Congress name. The Congress welcomes such movements, but, in the nature of things and under present conditions, the burden of carrying on the struggle for freedom must fall on the people of the States. The Congress will always extend its good-will and support to such struggles carried on in a peaceful and legitimate manner, but that organizational help will inevitably be, under existing condi-

and respect the Congress, it is a good thing; but, then, let them work with the moral support of the Congress but avoid the Congress name. Whenever the Congress can effectively help the States' people, it would do so not by actively meddling with their affairs, but by acting as an intermediary. Co-operation from within the States is an impossible proposition, and, therefore, I have been deliberately advising the States' people to refrain from having Congress Committees within the States. Some say: 'We would end the States.' Now, this cry does neither these friends nor the Indian States any harm. But it would harm them if they were actively interesting themselves in States affairs and trying to work there in the Congress name. The prestige of the Congress would suffer, and not gain, by the use of the Congress name. Mysore is a case in point. It had a *bona fide* Congress organization, but it could not prevent the Congress Flag from being insulted."

"But," said the friend from the States, "all these things have happened in British India."

"They have, and the Congress has always stood up to the insult. That is because in British India we can adopt civil disobedience for any good cause, but in the States it is impossible. The Congress Committees will have always to be at the mercy of the States, and would

tions, moral support and sympathy. Individual Congressmen, however, will be free to render further assistance in their personal capacities. In this way the struggle can develop without committing the Congress organization, and thus unhindered by external considerations.

"The Congress, therefore, directs that, for the present, Congress Committees in the States shall function under the direction and control of the Congress Working Committee, and shall not engage in parliamentary activity nor launch on direct action in the name and under the auspices of the Congress. Internal struggles of the people of the States must not be undertaken in the name of the Congress. For this purpose, independent organizations should be started and continued where they exist already within the States.

"The Congress desires to assure the people of the States of its solidarity with them and of its active and vigilant interest in and sympathy with their movement for freedom. It trusts that the day of their deliverance is not far distant."—*Harijan*: Feb. 26, 1938.



be in no better case than, for instance, a committee in Afghanistan, which would entirely exist on the mercy of the Government of Afghanistan. But, of course, this is my personal view and interpretation."

Most people seem to forget that Gandhiji himself hails from an Indian State, and, on his return from South Africa, deliberately selected as his headquarters Ahmedabad, and not an Indian State. "When I came to India," said Gandhiji, "I had an offer from three Indian States to settle and carry on my work from there. I had to decline the offer."

"But we do not ask for active help from the Congress. We want to organize under the aegis of the Congress. The onus of helping us would be upon the Congress, but we do not ask for the help."

"There it is," said Gandhiji. "Whether you ask for it or not, the onus would be upon the Congress, and it is not able to discharge it. Without being able to render any active support, the aegis of the Congress would be a superfluous affair. A big organization like the Congress cannot allow itself to be stultified. This is all as plain as a pikestaff to me. I do not know how the States' people fail to understand this. The best help that the Congress can render to-day is to destroy the delusion that it can actively help the Indian States. That will automatically mean that the States' people must learn to rely on themselves for all internal reforms."

"I understand this very well. But look at the resolution as finally passed. The new rider that has been added is absurd. We are allowed to have committees in States, but they will be allowed to do nothing. The position is anomalous."

"It is, I am afraid. It was a concession to the States' people, but a useless concession in terms of my interpretation."

"Then, what shall be our position? Shall we stop enrolling Congress members and begin to organize a separate national organization which will join the Congress under the present restrictions?"

"The real job is to build up your own organization.

But you may continue to be members of the Congress, attend it and keep in touch with it. But your real work will lie in the States. The resolution is permissive. You need not set up a Congress Committee in the States. But my advice is of no value. You must seek authoritative instructions from the Working Committee."

—*Mahadev Desai*

## THE STATES

“Let not the reformers in the States be unduly impatient; let them not forget their limitations and, above all, the conditions of success *viz.*, strictest observance of truth and non-violence. They must be ready to face bullets without flinching, but also without lifting their little finger in so-called self-defence.”

Events seem to have justified the wisdom of the Congress resolution of non-intervention in the affairs of the States. The constitution, however unjust, arbitrary and illogical it may be, is such that, legally and politically, every State, small or big, is an independent entity in its relation to the other States and that part of India which is called British in contradistinction from the States. The similarity common to all is that they are under the iron grip of British rule. But, geographically and ethnically, the people of the States and the other parts of India are one and indivisible. We, the thirty-five crores of men and women, are blood relations who cannot be parted by any constitutional or military device. This natural relationship is working itself, without let or hindrance, because of the recognition of the constitutional fact while it lasts. That is the way of *satyagraha* or the way of non-resistance to evil. It is the aseptic method in which the physician allows the poison to work itself out, by setting in motion all the natural forces and letting them have full play.

By its resolution of non-interference, the Congress put the States' people on their mettle, in other words set in motion the natural forces, *i.e.*, the powers latent in the people themselves. In the few recent instances, it has been found that the people having discovered their strength, they used it without any aid from outside and won full victory. The result also was that the assistance of Congressmen was invoked by the States authorities in order to settle the differences between themselves and their

people. No doubt this method, like every other known to mankind, has its limitations. The Congress cannot dictate unreasonable terms. The people must have a real grievance and they must approach it with pure hands. For, the tool of *satyagraha* is *ahimsa*, i.e., self-suffering without inflicting suffering on the opponent for the vindication of a cause which must be absolutely just.

If only the people of the States can realize the full meaning and potency of *satyagraha*, i.e., of non-violence, they will win their relative freedom before India as a whole comes to its own. And they will have to, before India has Independence. Thus, they can have full liberty of non-violent speech, writing and action without having to deal with cumbersome British machinery. They can secure with comparative ease a more equitable, even, if not an equal, distribution of the wealth produced in the States. They can, without much effort, regulate the privy purse of their Princes and can have cheap and pure justice guaranteed. They can deal with the problem of poverty and village reconstruction with infinitely greater ease than in unwieldy and bureaucracy-ridden British India. They can have real national education for the wanting.

This will be their *Swaraj*—no doubt, far short of the Independence that the Congress wants. But if the people of the majority of the major States attain their full height, the day of Independence will be hastened in a manner no one has dreamt of. Let not the reformers in the States, therefore, be unduly impatient; let them not forget their limitations and, above all, the conditions of success, viz., strictest observance of truth and non-violence. They must be ready to face bullets without flinching, but also without lifting their little finger in so-called self-defence. A *satyagrahi* abjures the right of self-defence. Let it also be remembered that a *satyagrahi's* minimum is also his maximum.

## NON-INTERVENTION

"Liberty is a dame exacting a heavy price from her wooers. And unless there are many who are prepared to pay the price, the few enthusiasts that are to be found everywhere would do well to conserve their energy."

Congress non-intervention in the affairs of the States was conceived in 1920, and has been, more or less, its policy since that time in spite of many onslaughts made on it. But I see that it has become the fashion in the States to quote against the Congress and Congressmen the self-imposed restraint, even when there is any attempt to criticize or offer advice or help. It is, therefore, necessary to examine the implications of non-intervention. It was never regarded as a principle. It was a limitation, imposed on itself by the Congress for its own sake and that of the people of the States. The Congress had no sanction behind its resolutions regarding the States. Its advice might be ignored, its intervention resented, and the people of the States might be harassed without gaining anything. There was certainly a friendly motive behind that policy. It was a wise recognition of the limited capacity of the Congress for doing good. The restraint exercised by the Congress, in this and many other ways, has given it a prestige and power which it would be unwise for it not to use. Any hesitation in this respect would be like that of the foolish steward who would not use the talents which were placed at his disposal. Up to a point, the States are beginning to recognize the power of the Congress, be it ever so reluctantly. It is becoming sufficiently clear that the people of the States are looking to the Congress for guidance and help. I think that it is the duty of the Congress to give them the guidance and help wherever it can. I wish I could convince every Congressman that the prestige and power of the Congress are in exact proportion to its inner purity,

its sense of exact justice and its all-round good-will. If the people of the States feel safe in entrusting their welfare to the Congress, the Princes should feel equally safe in trusting the Congress. All the prestige built up by patient effort of years will certainly be undermined, if the warnings uttered by me to the Congressmen go unheeded.

Even at the risk of tiresome repetition, let me say to the people of the States that they must not set much store by the Congress help. It is not enough that they are truthful and non-violent. It is necessary also for them to know their own capacity for suffering. Liberty is a dame exacting a heavy price from her wooers. And unless there are many who are prepared to pay the price, the few enthusiasts that are to be found everywhere would do well to conserve their energy. They will do well to undertake constructive service of the people without having an ambitious political programme. The ability to gain political ends will surely come from constructive service. Wisdom and patience will give them a power which in time will become irresistible.

## STATES AND THE PEOPLE

“If the Princes believe that the good of the people is also their good, they will gratefully seek and accept the Congress assistance. It is surely in their interests to cultivate friendly relations with an organization which bids fair in the future, not very distant, to replace the Paramount Power, let me hope, by friendly arrangement. Will they not read the hand-writing on the wall?”

The almost simultaneous awakening in the various States is a very significant event in the national struggle for independence. It will be wrong to think that such awakening can be due to the instigation of one person or a body of persons or any organization. It is just possible that the Haripura resolution of the Congress put the people of the States on their mettle and they realized, as never before, that their salvation depended upon their own labours. But, above all, it is the time spirit that has brought about the awakening. It is to be hoped that the Princes and their advisers will recognize it and meet the legitimate aspirations of the people. There is no half-way house between total extinction of the States, and the Princes making their people responsible for the administration of their States and themselves becoming trustees for the people, taking an earned commission for their labours.

I hope, therefore, the rumour is not true that the British Government are likely, at the instance of some Princes or their Dewans, to announce a change in the policy, recently enunciated by Earl Winterton, about the ability of the Princes to grant responsible government to their people. If any of them have asked the British Government to reverse the policy, they have undoubtedly done a disservice to themselves. And if the British Government respond to the unworthy wish, they will precipitate a first class crisis whose magnitude it is diffi-

cult to foretell. I must refuse to believe that the British Government can commit such a blunder. Earl Winterton's announcement was but an endorsement of past practice. They are not known to have ever interfered with the States giving powers to their people, however wide they might be.

I go a step further. Even as the British Government, as the Paramount Power, are bound to protect the Princes against harm from outside or within, they are equally or *a fortiori* bound to ensure just rule on the part of the Princes. Hence, it is their bounden duty, when they supply the police or the military to any State, to see that there is a proper emergency justifying the request and that the military or the police will be used with becoming restraint. From Dhenkanal have come to me stories of fiendish cruelty exercised by the State myrmidons under the shadow of the police supplied by the Paramount Power. I asked for evidence in support of some of the unnameable cruelties. And I have enough to inspire belief.

Indeed, it is a question whether responsible ministers in the provinces have not a moral responsibility in respect of the people of the States in their respective provinces. Under the constitution, the ministers have no power over them. The Governor is the agent of the Viceroy who is the representative of the Paramount Power. But the ministers in autonomous provinces have surely a moral responsibility regarding what happens in the States. So long as the States and the people are satisfied, ministers have no worry. But have they none if there is, say, virulent epidemic in the States which, if neglected, may easily overtake the province in which they are situated? Have they none when there is a moral epidemic which seems to be raging in Dhenkanal?

I understand that the persecuted people are taking refuge in British Orissa. Can the ministers refuse them shelter? How many can they take charge of? Whatever happens in these States affects, for better or for worse, the province as a whole. I do believe, therefore, that the ministers, by reason of the heavy responsibility resting on



their shoulders, have the moral right, with strict limits, to assert themselves for the sake of internal peace and decency. They cannot look on with unconcern while the people of the States—an arbitrary creation of the Paramount Power—are being ground to dust, as they in Dhenkanal are reported to be.

One reads in the papers that some concessions have been given to the people of Dhenkanal. I do not know whether the report is true and whether the relief answers the purpose for which the people of Dhenkanal are fighting and suffering. It is, however, irrelevant to the issue raised by me. I feel that the ministers in the provinces are morally bound to take notice of gross misrule in the States within their borders and to tender advice to the Paramount Power as to what, in their opinion, should be done. The Paramount Power, if it is to enjoy friendly relations with the provincial ministers, is bound to give sympathetic ear to their advice.

There is one other matter which demands the urgent attention of the States and their advisers. They fight shy of the very name of the Congress. They regard Congressmen as outsiders, foreigners and what not. They may be all that in law. But man-made law, if it is in conflict with the natural law, becomes a dead letter when the latter operates in full force. The people of the States look up to the Congress in all matters affecting their interest. Many of them are members of the Congress. Some like Shri Jamnalalji hold high offices in the Congress organization. In the eye of the Congress, there is no distinction between members from the States and from India called British. It is surely detrimental to the interests of the States to ignore the Congress or Congressmen, especially when it or they seek to render friendly assistance. They must recognize the fact that the people in the States are in many cases guided by the Congress. They know that I am responsible for the policy of non-interference hitherto followed by the Congress. But with the growing influence of the Congress, it is impossible for me to defend it in the face of injustice perpetrated in the States. If the Congress feels that it has the

power to offer effective interference, it will be bound to do so when the call comes. And if the Princes believe that the good of the people is also their good, they will gratefully seek and accept the Congress assistance. It is surely in their interest to cultivate friendly relations with an organization which bids fair in the future, not very distant, to replace the Paramount Power, let me hope, by friendly arrangement. Will they not read the handwriting on the wall?

## A CAUTION

“The idea underlying *satyagraha* is to convert the wrong-doer, to awaken the sense of justice in him, to show him also that without the co-operation, direct or indirect, of the wronged, the wrong-doer cannot do the wrong intended by him.”

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's and Shri Damodardas' requests respectively to non-Rajkot people and non-Hyderabad people not to take part in *satyagraha*, are timely and deserve to receive hearty response. It is the essence of *satyagraha* that those who are suffering should alone offer it. Cases can be conceived when what may be termed sympathetic *satyagraha* may be legitimately applied. But, so far as I see, there is nothing in the Rajkot or Hyderabad *satyagraha* to warrant outside participation. Indeed, it is likely to acerbate the authorities. The idea underlying *satyagraha* is to convert the wrong-doer, to awaken the sense of justice in him, to show him also that without the co-operation, direct or indirect, of the wronged, the wrong-doer cannot do the wrong intended by him. If the people in either case are not ready to suffer for their causes, no outside help in the shape of *satyagraha* can possibly bring true deliverance.

## RAJKOT

“Rama *Raj* means renunciation all along the line. It means discipline imposed by the people on themselves. If constructive non-violence is displayed by the people, it is possible for Rajkot to radiate an influence that can easily make Rajkot an example to follow.”

Hitherto, I have said hardly anything about the Rajkot struggle which has just ended as brilliantly as it began. My silence was not due to lack of interest. That was impossible owing to my intimate connections with the place. Apart from my father having been the Dewan of the State, the late Thakore Saheb looked up to me as to a father. My silence was due to the fact that Sardar Vallabhbhai was the soul of the movement. To praise him or his work would be like self-praise.

The struggle showed what non-violent non-cooperation could do, if there was adequate response from the people. I was wholly unprepared for the unity, grit and capacity for sacrifice that the people showed. They showed that they were greater than their Ruler, and that even an English Dewan was powerless before a people united in non-violent action.

The Thakore Saheb deserves congratulations for taking the reins in his own hands and over-ruling the English Dewan's advice and the known wishes of the Resident.

From documents in my possession I know that Sir Patrick Cadell, supported by the Resident, cut a sorry figure as servant of the Thakore Saheb. He acted as if he was the master. He traded upon the fact that he belonged to the ruling race and his appointment was subject to the sanction of the central authority, and thought that he could do what he liked. At the time of writing, I do not know whether he has wisely retired or what has happened. The correspondence in my possession

shows that the ruling Chiefs have seriously asked themselves whether it is wisdom to have Europeans as their Dewans. The central authority has to keep watch over Residents if its declarations are to be carried out as well in the letter as in the spirit.

It is to be hoped that the ruling Chiefs, who stand in awe of Residents, will know from the Rajkot example that if they are straight, and if they have their people really at their back, they have nothing to fear from the Residents. Indeed, they should realize that the Paramount Power resides not in Simla, not in Whitehall, but in their people. An awakened people, who rely upon their non-violent strength, are independent in the face of any conceivable combination of armed powers. What Rajkot could do in three months, every State can do if the people show the qualities that the people of Rajkot showed.

But I do not claim that the people of Rajkot had developed the rare type of non-violence that would stand true in the face of all odds. But Rajkot did show what even ordinary non-violence by a whole people in an organization could do for it.

But great as was the work done by the people of Rajkot, as civil resisters their real test is yet to come. Their victory, if it is not followed up by a sustained exhibition of the same qualities that secured it, may prove also their undoing. By a long course of training, Congressmen all over India have shown their capacity for offering civil resistance, but they have yet to show capacity for constructive non-violence. Civil disobedience may well be adulterated with much incivility, *i.e.*, violence, and yet pass current. But construction is very difficult. In it, detection of violence is easy. And existence of violence may even turn victory into a trap and prove it to have been a delusion. Will the people exhibit the requisite selflessness and self-denial? Will they resist the temptation to serve themselves and their dependants? Any scramble for power will rob the people at large of what they should really get, if there was wise and resolute leadership that would command ready and willing obedience. Kathiawad is noted for its intrigues. It contains

a race of politicals whose one aim in life is self-advancement, if it is also known to contain stuff of which heroes are made. If the politicals gain the upper hand, there will be no Rama *Raj* in Rajkot. Rama *Raj* means renunciation all along the line. It means discipline imposed by the people on themselves. If constructive non-violence is displayed by the people, it is possible for Rajkot to radiate an influence that can easily make Rajkot an example to follow.

Let the victory, therefore, be a time for humility, heart-search and prayer instead of self-satisfaction and vain rejoicings. I shall watch, wait and pray.

## RAJKOT

“The Congress Paramountcy avails only those who accept the banner of non-violence, even as the Paramountcy of Britain avails only those who subscribe to the doctrine of ‘might is right.’”

The struggle in Rajkot has a personal touch about it for me. It was the place where I received all my education up to the matriculation examination, and where my father was Dewan for many years. My wife feels so much about the sufferings of the people that though she is as old as I am, and much less able than myself to brave such hardships as may be attendant upon jail life, she feels she must go to Rajkot. And before this is in print she might have gone there.

But I want to take a detached view of the struggle. Sardar's statement, reproduced elsewhere<sup>1</sup>, is a legal document in the sense that it has not a superfluous word in it and contains nothing that cannot be supported by unimpeachable evidence, most of which is based on written records which are attached to it as appendices.

It furnishes evidence of a cold-blooded breach of a solemn covenant entered into between the Rajkot Ruler and his people. And the breach has been committed at the instance and bidding of the British Resident who is directly linked with the Viceroy.

To the covenant, a British Dewan was party. His boast was that he represented British authority. He had expected to rule the Ruler. He was, therefore, no fool to fall into the Sardar's trap. Therefore, the covenant was not an extortion from an imbecile ruler. The British Resident detested the Congress and the Sardar for the crime of saving the Thakore Saheb from bankruptcy and, probably, loss of his *gadi*. The Congress

<sup>1</sup> Omitted.

influence he could not brook. And so, before the Thakore Saheb could possibly redeem his promise to his people, he made him break it. If the news that the Sardar is receiving from Rajkot is to be believed, the Resident is showing the red claws of the British lion and says in effect to the people: "Your Ruler is my creature. I have put him on the *gadi* and I can depose him. He knew well enough that he had acted against my wishes. I have, therefore, undone his action in coming to terms with his people. For your dealings with the Congress and the Sardar, I shall teach you a lesson that you will not forget for a generation."

Having made the Ruler a virtual prisoner, he has begun a reign of terrorism in Rajkot. Here is what the latest telegram received by the Sardar says:

"Becharbhai Jasani and other volunteers arrested. Twenty-six volunteers taken at night to a distant place in the Agency limits and brutally beaten. Volunteers in villages are similarly treated. Agency police controlling State agency and searching private houses in civil limits."

The British Resident is repeating the performances of the British officials in 'British India' during the Civil Disobedience days.

I know that if the people of Rajkot can stand all this madness without themselves becoming mad, and meekly but resolutely and bravely suffer the inhumanities heaped upon them, they will come out victorious and, what is more, they will set free the Thakore Saheb. They will prove that they are the real rulers of Rajkot under the Paramountcy of the Congress. If, however, they go mad and think of impotent retaliation and resort to acts of violence, their state will be worse than before and the Paramountcy of the Congress will be of no effect. The Congress Paramountcy avails only those who accept the banner of non-violence, even as the Paramountcy of Britain avails only those who subscribe to the doctrine of 'might is right.'

What, then, is the duty of the Congress when the people of Rajkot have to face not the Ruler and his tiny police, but the disciplined hordes of the British Empire?



The first and natural step is for the Congress Ministry to make themselves responsible for the safety and honour of the people of Rajkot. It is true that the Government of India Act gives the Ministers no power over the States. But they are governors of a mighty province in which Rajkot is but a speck. As such, they have right and duties outside the Government of India Act. And these are much the most important. Supposing that Rajkot became the place of refuge for all the *goondas* that India could produce, supposing further that from there they carried on operations throughout India, the Ministers would clearly have the right and it would be their duty to ask the Paramount Power, through the British Representative in Bombay, to set things right in Rajkot. And it will be the duty of the Paramount Power to do so or to lose the Ministers. Every Minister in his province is affected by everything that happens in territories within his geographical limit, though outside his legal jurisdiction, especially if that thing hurts his sense of decency. Responsible government in those parts may not be the Ministers' concern, but if there is plague in those parts or butchery going on, it is very much their concern; or else, their rule is a sham and a delusion. Thus, the Ministers in Orissa may not sit comfortably in their chairs, if they do not succeed in sending 26,000 refugees of Talcher to their home with an absolute assurance of safety and freedom of speech and social and political intercourse. It is insufferable that the Congress, which is to-day in alliance with the British Government, should be treated as an enemy and an outsider in the States which are vassals of the British.

This wanton breach, instigated by the British Resident in Rajkot, of the charter of the liberty of its people is a wrong which must be set right at the earliest possible moment. It is like a poison corroding the whole body. Will H. E. the Viceroy realize the significance of Rajkot and remove the poison?

## “KICKS AND KISSES”

“If the people have shed fear and learnt the art of self-sacrifice, they need no favours. Kicks can never cow them. They will take what they need and assimilate it.”

The reader will read with painful interest the following account, said to be authentic, of the meeting recently held in Bombay of the Chamber of Princes :

“H. H. the Maharaja of Bikaner opened the discussions by narrating the events at Rajkot where, he said, the trouble was due to the absence of influential *Jagirdars*, the want of demarcation between the Privy Purse and the State Expenditure, and the smallness of the Kathiawad States. It was regarded as a test case by the Congress, and they had selected Rajkot for various reasons, the principal ones being that Rajkot, small and with limited resources, would not be able to withstand for long the onslaughts of the Congress, that the ground was ready for the delivery of such an attack, that the Congress was virile and active in Kathiawad, and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was near at hand to direct operations and conduct the campaign. H. H. the Maharaja of Bikaner then mooted the suggestion of common Police Force for a group of States, as the resources of individual States, particularly of small ones, are not extensive and, therefore, totally inadequate to face the common danger. Such also was the indication of the Paramount Power and of its representatives. No great reliance, he said, could now be placed on co-operation and help from adjoining British territories as Congress was supreme there and they naturally would not like to help Indian States. On the other hand, their sympathies, either tacitly or actively, are on the side of Indian States’ subjects or foreign agitators. This was actually evidenced by the attitude of the Orissa Government when help was demanded by the States in Orissa which had to face this trouble.

“Continuing, he stated that the Congress would devote increasingly greater attention to Indian States. Up to now its policy, as embodied in the resolution of the Haripura session and before, was of non-intervention, and the Indian States’ people were directed to be self-reliant. The reason is manifest. The Congress was actively busy with British Indian problems, and it wanted to generate strength in Indian States’ subjects and foster self-help

in them. Now the Congress had practically established its sway in British India and would naturally mobilize its energy and influence towards Indian States.

"There was another point. In order to distract attention from the differences that are creeping into Congress ranks, it is necessary to unfold the plans of a campaign. This is a subtle but short dictum of state-craft. This is one of the reasons of the Italian conquest of Abyssinia and the Austrian and Sudetan campaigns of Germany. It enables the Powers to draw attention away from cleavages in the party and creates enthusiasm amongst its followers. We have also to bear in mind the attitude of the Paramount Power. In this connection, reference must be made to the recent utterances of Mr. Gandhi on this subject. In my opinion, greater reliance should be placed on our own strength than on any outside agency whose support is, at best, precarious and inadequate.

"After a survey of Rajkot affairs, His Highness discussed the problems of the Rajputana States and outlined for the benefit of the Princes the policy he pursued with regard to his own State, Bikaner. He stated that he started the State Assembly in 1913, and it discussed the State expenditure. Bikaner had a *Raj-patra*—State Gazette. He discriminated between the agitators from outside and from amongst his own subjects. This, he said, was important and the distinction must ever be borne in mind. Foreign agitators, who have no stake in the State and who assume this role merely to be dubbed leaders and to be in the public eye, deserve short shrift. No consideration should be shown to them. Their continued activities are a menace to the State; their presence constitutes a danger. The remedy is deportation from the State and their entry should be banned. The agitators in the State, though equally obnoxious to the State and its ordered peace and progress, however, stand on a slightly different footing. They have an interest in the land; they probably sometimes advocate grievances which are to a certain extent legitimate, and such should be redressed, as far as possible, so that the wind may be taken away from the sails of their agitation which they advocate and foster. Legitimate grievances, so far as possible, should be redressed and agitation should be silenced. If the agitators are genuine and come from the ranks of the educated unemployed, an effort should be made to give them suitable State employment and so close their mouths, acting on the adage "it is better to sew the mouth with a morsel."

"The question of Praja Mandals was then discussed. In this connection, H. H. the Maharaja of Bikaner, Sir Kailash Narain Haksar, R. B. Pandit Amar Nath Atal of Jaipur, Pt. Dharam Narain of Udaipur and Major Harvey of Alwar made valuable contributions to the discussions. Mr. Robertson of Bundi and Mr. McGregor of Sirohi also asked a few questions. Mr. Atal nar-

rated at great length the origin and growth of the Praja Mandal at Jaipur. It was evident that the founders and promoters of these Praja Mandals were disgruntled subjects and dismissed petty officials of the State. A note of caution and warning was sounded. It was agreed that they should be watched very carefully and their activities, however slight or extensive, should be fully reported. It was stated that these Praja Mandals should be crushed immediately and that they should not be allowed to gather strength or to attain the status of an influential body. If they had gained any, an effort should be made to direct adroitly their activities into social channels such as the Sarda Act, etc. On the other hand, it was urged that the formation of genuine and healthy advisory bodies of the States' people should be encouraged, which should form the nucleus for the training of the people for so-called responsible government in the States. The Praja Mandals located outside the States should be ignored.

“As regards responsible government in the States, advocated by Congress leaders like Messrs. Gandhi and Patel, it was felt that the States' people are not at all ready for it, and to concede it, therefore, would be detrimental to the States and the people and fatal to ordered progress and peace. The position was summed up in the dictum: ‘Be responsive, but no responsible government.’ H. H. the Maharaja of Bikaner was emphatic in his policy towards the Congress, and his words can be crystallized in the following mottoes : Be just, but be firm; follow the policy of ‘repression and reconciliation’ as stated in the famous letter of Lord Minto in 1908; ‘the policy of kicks and kisses.’ It will require all the tact and discretion possible to adjust when to be gentle and when to be firm and how to mix the two. The decision must depend on the situation which confronts the State and the merits of the individual problem. It was, however, very clear in their discussions that the Praja Mandals, as such and as political bodies, should never be allowed to be formed in the States, and, if in existence, should be crushed and banned and their activities very carefully and closely watched. No hard and fast rules could be laid down as to how they should be repressed. Individual States will devise and evolve their own plans and lay down the *modus operandi*.

“The tentative conclusions arrived at were: 1. Group Police for States; 2. Praja Mandals to be crushed immediately; 3. Legitimate grievances to be redressed; 4. Foreign agitators to be severely dealt with and deported; 5. Encourage social activities but not political; 6. Encourage genuine State People's Advisory Bodies; 7. Policy of ‘Reconciliation and repression’; ‘Be just, but be firm.’”

If the report is an accurate summary of the speeches delivered at the Conference, it shows that there is a nefa-

rious plot to crush the movement for liberty which, at long last, has commenced in some of the States. Kisses are to go hand in hand with kicks. This reminds me of the Latin proverb which means: "I fear the Greeks especially when they bring gifts!" Henceforth, Rulers' favours are to be suspected. Reforms, when they are made, are to be made not for the sake of making the people happy, but in order to sew the mouth with a morsel. But man's proposals are often confounded even though his may be a crowned head. God has been found often to have disposed of his proposals in a way contrary to his expectations. If the people have shed fear and learnt the art of self-sacrifice, they need no favours. Kicks can never cow them. They will take what they need and assimilate it.

## RAJKOT AND JAIPUR

“In my opinion, it is the duty of the Viceroy to ask the Resident in Rajkot to restore the pact and to ask the British Prime Minister of Jaipur to lift the bans. Such action by the Viceroy can, in no sense, be interpreted to mean unwarranted interference in the affairs of States.”

Appeals are being made to me not to precipitate matters in the States. These appeals are unnecessary. After three months of non-violent struggle by the people of Rajkot, an honourable understanding was arrived at between the Thakore Saheb-in-Council and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel representing the people, and the struggle was closed amid general rejoicings. But the noble work done by the Thakore Saheb and the people has been undone by the British Resident. Honour demanded that the people should fight unto death for the restoration of the covenant between the Thakore Saheb and his people. The struggle now is not between the Ruler and his people, but, in reality, it is between the Congress and the British Government represented by the Resident, who is reported to be resorting to organized *goondaism*. He is trying thereby to break the spirit of innocent men and women, who rightly resent the breach of faith. It is a misrepresentation to suggest that Rajkot has been made a test case. There is no planned action with reference to Kathiawad States. What is happening is that those who feel that they are ready for suffering come to the Sardar for advice and he guides them. Rajkot seemed ready and the fight commenced there.

Jaipur's case is incredibly simple and different from that of Rajkot. If my information is correct, the British Prime Minister there is determined to prevent even the movement for popularizing the ideal for responsible government. Civil disobedience in Jaipur is being, therefore, offered not for responsible government but

for the removal of the bans on the Praja Mandal and its president Seth Jamnalal Bajaj.

In my opinion, it is the duty of the Viceroy to ask the Resident in Rajkot to restore the pact and to ask the British Prime Minister of Jaipur to lift the bans. Such action by the Viceroy can, in no sense, be interpreted to mean unwarranted interference in the affairs of States.

## “NOT A WAR OF WORDS”

“I have not asked that the Thakore Saheb should be asked to do this or that. He has no will. His will is pledged to the Resident. .... What I have asked is that the Resident should restore the pact and help to honour it.”

The *Communiqués* issued by the Government of India and the Jaipur Government on my statements on Rajkot and Jaipur are remarkable for sins of omission and commission and suppression.

It was no part of the Sardar's duty to publish the Thakore Saheb's letter about the composition of the Committee. It was for the Thakore Saheb's convenience that a condition as to the composition of the Committee was embodied in a separate letter. This is a well-known procedure adopted in delicate negotiations. Surely, the Thakore Saheb's understanding of his note, which admits of no double interpretation, is wholly irrelevant. I aver that this understanding is an after-thought, discovered to placate the Resident, who was angered that the Thakore Saheb should have dared to deal with a Congressman and give him a note of which he had no advice. Those who know anything of these Residents and States know in what dread the Princes stand of even their secretaries and peons. I write from personal knowledge.

There is sufficient in the appendices to the Sardar's statement on the recrudescence of the struggle to show how the whole trouble is due to the Resident's displeasure. It is wrong to suggest that the Sardar did not give reasons for his refusal to alter the names of the Committee. A translation of his letter is one of the appendices.

When the Thakore Saheb agreed to nominate those whom the Sardar recommended, Mussalmans and Bhatyats were before his mind's eye. But it was common cause that all rights would be guaranteed under the reforms. The proper procedure would have been to lead



evidence before the Committee. I suggest that, as happens everywhere in India, the Mussalman and Bhayat objection to the personnel of the Committee was engineered after the event.

I have not asked that the Thakore Saheb should be asked to do this or that. He has no will. His will is pledged to the Resident. The Thakore Saheb once dared to act against his suspected wishes. He was on the brink of losing his *gadi*. What I have asked is that the Resident should restore the pact and help to honour it. If it is a matter purely of names to placate interests, I undertake to persuade the Sardar to make the accommodation, provided that its other parts are carried out to the full.

But the *Communiqué* adroitly omits the most relevant fact that the terms of reference, too, have been altered out of shape. These were agreed to by the Thakore Saheb-in-Council, of which the British Dewan was a member. I have never known such a dishonourable breach of a pact signed on behalf of a Chief. I do suggest that the Resident, who should be the custodian of the honour of the Chiefs within his jurisdiction, has, in this case, dragged the Thakore Saheb's name in the dust.

I repeat the charge of organized *goondaism*. The Agency police are operating in Rajkot. Wires received by the Sardar show that civil resisters are taken to distant places, there stripped naked, beaten and left to their own resources. They show further that Red Cross doctors and ambulance parties have been prevented from rendering help to those who were injured by *lathi* charges in Halenda. I call this organized *goondaism*. If the charges are denied, there should be an impartial inquiry.

Let me state the issue clearly. I seek no interference in the affairs of the State. I seek non-interference by the Resident in Rajkot. The Resident is directly responsible for the strained relations between the State and the people. It is the duty of the Paramount Power to see that the solemn pact is fulfilled to the letter and in spirit.

If the objection about Muslim and Bhayat representation has any honesty about it, it can be removed. I once more appeal to His Excellency the Viceroy to study

the question more deeply than he has done. Let not a grave tragedy be enacted while whitewashing *Communiqués* are being forged in the Delhi Secretariat. This is not a war of words. It is a war in which the people who have hitherto never been to jail nor suffered *lathi* blows are exposing themselves to all risk.

As for Jaipur, I have only one word. I do know that the British Prime Minister is one member of the Jaipur State Council. My submission is that he is all in all. He has vowed vengeance against the Praja Mandal and Seth Jamnalalji. And, in spite of the forest of words about action in respect of the Praja Mandal, I claim that virtually it is declared illegal. If not, let the authorities leave Seth Jamnalalji free to enter Jaipur and let him and his Mandal educate unmolested the people in the art of responsible government. Let them be punished if they inculcate violence, directly or indirectly.

## NOT GUILTY

“As a votary of truth and *ahimsa*, my business is to state the naked truth. My non-violence does not require any gilding of a bitter pill. .... I cannot succeed in weaning people from the path of violence by hiding or dressing the naked truth.”

Critics of my recent writings on Rajkot and Jaipur have accused me of being guilty of untruth and violence. I owe them an answer. Such accusations have been made against me before now, indeed since my entry into public life. I am happy to be able to say that most of my critics have later been obliged to acknowledge that I had not been guilty of either untruthful or violent language, and that my statements were based on my belief in them and made without malice. Even so is the case in the present instance. I am fully aware of my responsibility.

I know that many of my countrymen put implicit faith in my statements. I have been asked for proofs in support of my statements. I have given them. Sardar Patel has reproduced in his statement on Rajkot the remarks of the Resident reported to have been made by him about the Congress and himself. The memorandum of the conversation between the Resident, the Thakore Saheb and the Councillors including Sir Patrick Cadell, is in my possession. It is too long to be published, but it will be, if the occasion requires it.

As for organized *goondaism*, the facts have been published. I connect the Resident with it because he has sent the Agency police to the State and must be held responsible for the acts of his agents.

Similarly, the British Prime Minister of Jaipur is responsible for everything that is happening in Jaipur. The making of Seth Jamnalal Bajaj a foot-ball to be kicked out of Jaipur every time he dares to exercise the right of entering his birth-place, is surely worse than unseemly.

I am not guilty of violence of language when I correctly characterize actions. I should be guilty of violence if I harboured any ill-feeling against the Kathiawad Resident or the Jaipur Prime Minister. For aught I know, they may be most estimable men to meet, but their being estimable does not help the people of Rajkot or Jaipur. As a votary of truth and *ahimsa*, my business is to state the naked truth. My non-violence does not require any gilding of a bitter pill. I must, therefore, plead not guilty to the charge of racial animosity. I cannot succeed in weaning people from the path of violence by hiding or dressing the naked truth.

I hope to wean them by telling them and, what is more, showing by my conduct that it is not only right but profitable to wish well to the wrong-doer in spite of his wrongs, however grievous these may be. Protection of the Princes is a duty the Paramount Power owes to them, but surely it is equally its duty to protect the people living in their jurisdiction. It seems to me that it is also their duty to withhold support from Princes when it is proved that a Ruler is guilty of breach of faith with his people, as in Rajkot, or when it is proved that his people are denied ordinary civil liberty and one of his citizens is driven from pillar to post and practically denied access to courts of justice, as in the case of Jaipur.

The more I think of what is happening in the States in India, I see nothing but a dark future for this unhappy land if the Paramount Power remains a helpless witness of the tragedy that is being enacted in Princes' India. For, what is happening in Rajkot and Jaipur is but a sample of what is going to happen presently in the other States.

The Maharaja of Bikaner was right when he advised concerted action among the Princes. Only His Highness gave the wrong lead. The doctrine of kicks and kisses will lead the Princes nowhere. He has shown bitterness and strife. The people of the States may not be able to take concerted action as the Princes can, but the latter will not be able to treat the people from the States other than their own, or those from British India,

as foreigners. There is sufficient awakening among the people of the States to withstand the pressure even from concerted unity among the Princes.

## WHY KASTURBA GANDHI?

“The success of the struggle in Rajkot will be a stage forward in the fight for freedom. And when it ends in success, as it must, sooner or later, I hope that Kasturba’s share will count as a humble contribution towards it.”

I had not intended to say anything about my wife having joined the Rajkot struggle. But some cruel criticism I have seen about her intervention prompts an explanation. It had never occurred to me that she should join it. For one thing, she is too old for such hardships as are involved in being in civil disobedience struggles. But, strange as it may appear to critics, they must believe me when I say that though she is illiterate, she is and has been for years absolutely free to do what she likes. When she joined the struggle in South Africa or in India, it was of her own inner prompting. And so it was this time. When she heard of Maniben’s arrest, she could not restrain herself and asked me to let her go. I said she was too weak. She had just then fainted in her bathroom in Delhi and might have died but for Devadas’s presence of mind. She said she did not mind. I, then, referred her to Sardar. He would not hear of it either.

But this time he melted. He had seen my grief over the breach of faith by the Thakore Saheb and induced by the Resident. The reader must realize my ancestral connection with Rajkot and the intimate personal relations I had with the present Ruler’s father. Kasturba is a daughter of Rajkot. She felt a personal call. She could not sit still whilst the other daughters of Rajkot were suffering for the freedom of the men and women of the State. Rajkot is, no doubt, an insignificant place on the map of India. But it is not insignificant for me and my wife. As a child she was brought up in Rajkot, though born in Porbandar. And, after all, neither she nor I

can be unconcerned in a struggle which is based on non-violence, and in which so many reliable co-workers are involved.

The success of the struggle in Rajkot will be a stage forward in the fight for freedom. And when it ends in success, as it must, sooner or later, I hope that Kāsturba's share will count as a humble contribution towards it. *Satyagraha* is a struggle in which the oldest and the weakest in body may take part, if they have stout hearts.

## THE ETHICS OF IT

"I claim to be very sensitive to points of honour. My worst critics have credited me with the capacity to respect confidences and bury secrets entrusted to me. But I have never regarded it any part of my duty to protect breaches of promises against disclosure or to cover crimes of which I have notice in due course."

A friend suggests that I have, perhaps, departed from correct conduct in publishing the confidential correspondence between the Thakore Saheb and Sir Patrick Cadell and extracts from the interview between the Thakore Saheb-in-Council and the Resident. I have no such feeling at all. I claim to be very sensitive to points of honour. My worst critics have credited me with the capacity to respect confidences and bury secrets entrusted to me. But I have never regarded it any part of my duty to protect breaches of promises against disclosure or to cover crimes of which I have notice in due course. I do protect confessions made to me in confidence, as I did when I was asked on pain of being punished by a court of law to disclose the names of criminals during the unfortunate riots in Ahmedabad at the time of the Rowlatt Act agitation. In the case in question, there is no such point of honour. Regard for truth and the popular cause demanded publication of the correspondence and the extracts. The documents were received by the Sardar in ordinary course. They were handed by those who were in legal possession. There was, therefore, so far as I can see, nothing dishonourable about getting possession of the documents and, as I have said, nothing incorrect, much less dishonourable, about their publication. Without such publication, the popular case could not be proved.



## RAJKOT STATEMENTS

### I

“Let the *satyagrahis* understand that the first thing they have to show is an infinite capacity for suffering with inward joy and without malice or anger.”

*Gandhiji issued the following statement to the Press from Segaoon on February 23, 1939 :*

I continue to receive daily wires about hunger-strikes in Rajkot over the treatment, said to be inhuman, of prisoners and others in villages. The Rajkot matter is becoming daily graver because of the breach of faith on the Ruler's part with which the second struggle started. Agitated inquirers should know that I am in telegraphic correspondence with the State authorities. I hope to take them into confidence in the near future. In the meantime, let the *satyagrahis* understand that the first thing they have to show is an infinite capacity for suffering with inward joy and without malice or anger.

### II

“Though Rajkot is a tiny place on the map of India, the principle for the vindication of which I go to Rajkot is one without which society must disintegrate.”

*Gandhiji issued the following statement to the Press from Segaoon on February 25, 1939 :*

The following telegrams have been exchanged between the First Member of the Rajkot State Council and myself :

“Hear *satyagraha* prisoners Rajkot jail fasting, for, Sardhar prisoners said to be inhumanly treated. Could you enlighten me?—Gandhi.” (dated, February 20)

“Your telegram. Personally visited Sardhar yesterday. No truth absolutely whatsoever regarding ill-treatment to prisoners.—First Member Council.” (dated, February 21)

“Thanks wire. You are silent about hunger-strike. Have again long wire about atrocities which difficult to disbelieve. Every day urge growing that I should myself plunge. Agony of Ruler’s breach of faith, coupled with growing tales of terrorism, becoming unbearable. Have no desire embarrass Thakore Saheb or Council. Would like you listen to voice of old man claiming to be Rajkot’s friend.—Gandhi.” (dated, February 22)

“Absolutely no truth in allegations of ill-treatment to Sardhar prisoners. Whole thing nothing but fabrication. Regular programme of daily diet, bedding, etc., nearly on same lines as Rajkot, arranged. Written information to above effect given to prisoners on hunger-strike in local jail by me. In spite of these, they unreasonably insist continue fasting. Assure you everything humanly possible being done give fair treatment. Please have no anxiety.—First Member.” (dated, February 23)

“If all reports are fabrication, it is serious for me and co-workers. If there is substance in them, it is serious reflection on State authorities. Meanwhile, the hunger-strike continues. My anxiety is unbearable. Therefore, propose start for Rajkot tomorrow night taking with me medical attendant, secretary and typist. I come in search of truth and as peace-maker. Have no desire to court arrest. I want to see things for myself and shall make ample amends if my co-workers have been guilty of fabrication. I shall also plead with Thakore Saheb to repair breach of faith with his people. I shall ask people to avoid demonstrations and am asking Sardar Patel, pending my effort in Rajkot, to suspend *satyagraha* by persons in Rajkot or from outside. If by any chance Thakore Saheb and Council can restore pact intact, subject to adjustment of members, and prisoners are immediately set free and fines restored, I naturally cancel my proposed departure. You can send official with full authority to negotiate adjustment as to personnel. Majority of Sardar Patel’s nominees will be a condition. May God guide Thakore Saheb and his Councilors. May I expect express wire?—Gandhi.” (dated, February 24)

“Since your telegram you must have received information that hunger-strike has been discontinued since last night, having no justification, as telegram sent to you by Nanalal Jasani and Mohanlal Gadhawala must have convinced you. His Highness does not consider there has been any breach of faith on his part, and is only anxious that representative committee appointed by him should be able to start working in calm atmosphere, so that he may be in a position to introduce, as soon as possible, such reform as may be found by him to be required after fully consider-

ing the committee's recommendations. His Highness feels sure that, in circumstances explained, you will appreciate that no useful purpose could be served by your coming here now. He wishes once again to assure you that no atrocities or terrorism have been or will be allowed.—First Member.” (dated, February 24)

“Your wire is not answer to my heart-felt entreaty. I leave for Rajkot to-day on my mission of peace.—Gandhi.” (dated, February 25)

These wires tell their own tale. I am glad that the fast is broken. That certainly removes one cause of anxiety. But the charge of fabrication abides. I know personally many of the workers in Rajkot. They and I must make full reparation, if they have resorted to falsehood in order to make out a case of atrocities against the authorities. The struggle in Rajkot, as in other States, is part of the struggle for the liberation of India. Mutual mud-slinging cannot advance the cause. Truth must be ascertained.

The telegram of the First Member denies the charge of breach of faith. It baffles me. I do not know what is meant by the denial. The notification announcing the pact, and the notification announcing the breach with Sardar Patel are clearly contradictory, as one reads the plain language of the two.

I have suggested that the Resident at Rajkot is responsible for the breach. I have been told that I have been hasty in bringing this charge and that there is another side. If there is, it is my duty to know it. I shall make it a point to seek an interview with him and, if I find that I have done an injustice to him, I shall tender a public apology. I feel that it is wrong on my part to allow the sufferings to continue in the midst of mutual recriminations. The least I can do is to go to Rajkot and find out the truth and invite the Thakore Saheb to repair what is a palpable breach of faith, unless I discover that the repudiation of this charge is somehow justified.

If the statements made by the workers about atrocities are true, there must be found a way of avoiding such exhibitions of man's worst passions. He must be helped against himself, if it is at all possible. It is part of the

struggle for liberty, if it is non-violent, to reclaim even the *goondas*, whether they are to be found among the people or those in authority. By going to Rajkot, I want to exert myself to the utmost of my capacity and find out the way of dealing with the *goonda* element in society. In this respect, Rajkot is a test case. I go to Rajkot because I am the same friend of the States that I have always claimed to be.

It hurts me that by force of circumstances, all of which, perhaps, I do not know, the Ruler of Rajkot has been made to break his word given to his people. I hold that it is the duty of the Princes of Kathiawad, if not of all India, and their advisers to help to rectify the wrong if it is done. An honourable mutual understanding is impossible if faith becomes a valueless article. Life to me becomes a burden when I find myself witness of a breach of faith, as it happens to be in this case. Let it be recalled that I was the author of the draft that the Ruler of Rajkot signed with but a slight modification. I know that Sardar Vallabhbhai left no stone unturned to ensure that it was signed with the fullest understanding.

As I go to Rajkot purely as a messenger of peace, I have asked Sardar Patel to suspend the Rajkot civil resistance whilst under God's guidance I make the humble effort to end the agony. The public will please remember that I am an invalid so far as the body is concerned. They will avoid demonstrations at the stations. Though Rajkot is a tiny place on the map of India, the principle for the vindication of which I go to Rajkot is one without which society must disintegrate.

## THE FIERY ORDEAL

### I

#### “GOD GAVE ME THE REMEDY”

“Rightly or wrongly, I know that I have no other resource as a *satyagrahi* than the assistance of God in every conceivable difficulty, and I would like it to be believed that what may appear to be inexplicable actions of mine are really due to inner promptings.”

*On hearing a rumour that Gandhiji had decided to enter upon a fast, if his request contained in a letter said to have been addressed to the Thakore Sabej was not complied with, a group of Press correspondents approached Gandhiji on 2nd March to ask if he could throw some light on the subject. In reply, Gandhiji said :*

I am sorry to have to say ‘yes’ in answer to your question. I am also sorry that the information has leaked out before its time. I do not wish as yet to publish my letter. All that I would like to say at this critical juncture is, that it cost me a night’s rest before I came to the conclusion that if the suspended struggle was not to be revived, and if the atrocities, of which I have heard so much and of which I was obliged to make mention in my Press note were also not to be revived, I must adopt some effective remedy to end the agony, and God gave me the remedy.

The public should not laugh at my connecting God with the proposed step. Rightly or wrongly, I know that I have no other resource as a *satyagrahi* than the assistance of God in every conceivable difficulty, and I would like it to be believed that what may appear to be inexplicable actions of mine are really due to inner promptings.

It may be a product of my heated imagination. If it is so, I prize that imagination as it has served me for a

chequered life extending over a period of now nearly over 55 years, because I learned to rely consciously upon God before I was 15 years old.

One thing more. The weapon of fasting, I know, cannot be lightly wielded. It can easily savour of violence, unless it is used by one skilled in the art. I claim to be such an artist in this subject.

It should be remembered that I am intimately connected with Rajkot and its Rulers. Regarding the Thakore Saheb as my own son, I have every right to evoke the best in his nature by means of self-suffering. If my fast, which I hope will be avoided, is to be interpreted as pressure, I can only say that such moral pressure should be welcomed by all concerned.

A breach of promise shakes me to my root, especially when I am in any way connected with the author of the breach. And if it cost my life, which after all at the age of 70 has no insurance value, I should most willingly give it in order to secure due performance of a sacred and solemn promise.

## II

### "HE WILL GIVE ME STRENGTH"

"I have no recollection of a single experiment of mine in fasting having been a fruitless effort. In addition, I had the experience of priceless peace and unending joy during all those fasts, and I have come to the conclusion that fasting, unless it is the result of God's grace, is useless starvation, if not much worse."

*On releasing his letter to the Thakore Saheb for publication on 3rd March, Gandhiji in a statement to the Press said:*

I release my letter to the Thakore Saheb with a heavy heart, but I have had the misfortune many a time to perform painful duties. This is one of them. I would like all friends and sympathizers rigidly to refrain from embarking on sympathetic fasts, even for one day. I know that fasting like *satyagraha* is very much abused now-a-days. One finds people fasting on the slightest pretext.

Often, there is violence behind such fasting. If for no other reason than for this practical reason of preventing thoughtless imitation, I was most reluctant to undertake this fast. But an inner urge brooks no denial. I can only, therefore, warn the people, who may wish hereafter to fast for redress of grievances, real or imaginary, against imitating me. Fasting, like some very potent medicines, can only be taken on rare occasions and under expert guidance. It is wrong, it is sinful, for everybody to consider himself an expert.

Let the public know that at a very early age I began fasting for self-purification, and then I took a prolonged fast for an erring son of mine. This was soon after followed by a still more prolonged fast for an erring daughter of a very dear friend. In both these cases, the results justified the fasts. The first public fast that I undertook was in South Africa in connection with sufferings of the indentured who had joined the *satyagraha* struggle in South Africa. I have no recollection of a single experiment of mine in fasting having been a fruitless effort. In addition, I had the experience of priceless peace and unending joy during all those fasts, and I have come to the conclusion that fasting, unless it is the result of God's grace, is useless starvation, if not much worse.

The second thing I would like to say is, that there should be no bitter speeches or writings either in connection with the Thakore Saheb or his advisers or the Resident. I have used strong language in connection with the Resident and action of State officials. If I find that I have in any way wronged them, I know how to make reparations. Any harsh language, used in connection with the Thakore Saheb or other actors in the tragedy, will mar the effect the fast is intended to produce.

The breach of a solemn pact does not require any harsh or bitter language in order to enhance the enormity of the evil consequences of such breaches. What the public and the Press can usefully do is, by a dignified disapproval of the Thakore Saheb's action, to bring home to him the pressure of enlightened public opinion.

All *satyagraha* and fasting is a species of *tyaga*. It

depends for its effects upon an expression of wholesome public opinion, shorn of all bitterness. Let there be no impatience to produce the desired result because of fasting. He who has urged me to undertake the fast, will give me strength to go through it, and if it is His will that I should still live for a while on this earth to carry on the self-chosen mission of humanity, no fast, however prolonged, will dissolve the body.

I am painfully conscious of the fact that my fast in connection with the late Mr. Macdonald's decision on the communal question induced many persons to act against their will. I hope no such thing will happen in connection with this fast. If there are public men who think that I have erred in characterizing the Thakore Saheb's Notification of January 21 as a breach of the promise made by the Notification of December 26, they will perform a friendly act by condemning my characterization, as also the fast. It is designed undoubtedly to melt the Thakore Saheb's heart, but it is in no sense designed to coerce public opinion into bringing pressure to bear upon the Thakore Saheb or those in whose opinion his action may be free of all blame.

Another thing, I would like to mention, is the first paragraph of my letter in which I have criticized Durbar Viravala. I can truthfully say that I am slow to see the blemishes of fellow-beings, being myself full of them and, therefore, being in need of their charity. I have learnt not to judge any one harshly and to make allowances for defects that I may detect.

What has happened about Durbar Viravala is that I have been inundated by very bitter and serious complaints against him. In my conversations with him, I had even made mention of those complaints, and let me say to his credit that he invited me to investigate those complaints. I told him that I would do so, and but for the intervention of the fast it was fully my desire to undertake this investigation.

I had already invited friends to put me in possession of evidence in support of specific allegations against him; but prolonged conversations with him for three days



confirmed the impression that the complaints against him had produced upon me, so much so that I felt that the evidence that the conversations gave me was sufficient proof of the heavy indictment against him.

What I have said in the first paragraph of my letter is a deliberate understatement of my opinion. It gave me much pain to write that paragraph, but it was necessary for my mission to warn the Thakore Saheb of the overpowering influence that he exercises over His Highness. Sober and influential persons, not few but many, have repeatedly told me that so long as Durbar Viravala exercises that influence upon the Thakore Saheb, there is no peace for the people. I myself feel that there is very considerable truth in this statement, and it would be wrong on my part, whilst I am embarking upon the fast, to suppress this relevant truth from the public. I have sent a private and personal letter to him, which, so far as I am concerned, shall never see the light of day. But I do make a humble appeal to him, and I would like those who know him to join me in the appeal, that he should refrain from influencing the Thakore Saheb, although the latter may find it difficult to free himself from that influence. I can say much more, but I must not.

Although I have been in exile from Kathiawad for more than a generation and a half, I know how turbid Kathiawad politics is. This unfortunate sub-province is notorious for its intrigues. I have felt its deadly influence even during these four days. How I wish that my fast may contribute, be it ever so little, to the purification of Kathiawad politics. I, therefore, invite the Princes and politicians of Kathiawad to use my fast to rid Kathiawad of the deadening influence of the poisonous atmosphere that makes healthy living in Kathiawad so difficult.

## III

GANDHIJI'S LETTER TO THAKORE SAHEB  
*(Translated from original Gujarati by Gandhiji)*

Anand Kunj,  
 Rajkot: March 2, 1939

Maherban Thakore Sahab,

I write this letter not without hesitation, but duty compels it.

You know the reason for my coming here. For three days I had conversation with Durbar Viravala. He gave me cause for intense dissatisfaction. He seems to be incapable of keeping his resolutions from moment to moment. Such is my opinion based upon my three days' contact with him. In my opinion, his guidance has harmed the State.

Now I come to the object of this letter. At the time of leaving Wardha, I had resolved that I would not leave Rajkot without inducing fulfilment of your promise. But I had never thought that I would have to be here for more than one or two days or that I would have to suffer what I have suffered.

My patience is exhausted. I should hasten to Tripuri, if it is at all possible. If I do not go, over a thousand co-workers will be disappointed and lakhs of poor people will become disconsolate. Time, therefore, has a special value for me at this juncture.

I beseech you, therefore, to adopt with a full heart the following suggestions of mine and free me from anxiety by speeding me on my return journey to-morrow.

1. You should announce to the people that your Notification No. 50, dated 26th December, stands.

2. You should cancel your Notification No. 61, dated 21st January. Names 2, 3, 5 and 7 of the Reforms Committee announced by you should stand and you should accept on behalf of the Rajkot Rajkiya Praja Parishad the following names :

1. U. N. Dhebar
2. P. P. Anada
3. V. M. Shukla
4. J. H. Joshi
5. S. V. Modi

The underlying motive of this suggestion is that the Parishad should have a majority on its side.

3. Shri U. Dhebar should be appointed as President of the Committee.

4. You should appoint three or less than three officials as guides and advisers to the Committee. They should be such as I could accept on behalf of the Parishad. They should have no

vote in the proceedings of the Committee.

5. You should issue instructions to the heads of the several departments of the State to furnish to the Committee such papers, figures and other material and assistance as it may need. You should appoint for the use of the Committee suitable quarters in the Secretariat.

6. My advice is that the advisers, whom you may appoint in terms of Clause 4, should form the Executive Council and that Council should be responsible for the management of the State in the spirit of the Notification of the 26th December, so as not to do anything likely to be injurious to its main purpose. One of them should be the President of the Council. You will unhesitatingly endorse the actions of the Council. If you deem it fit to appoint persons other than the advisers of the Committee as Councillors, the appointment should be made in consultation with me.

The Committee should commence its proceedings on the 7th inst. and finish them by the 22nd inst. The enforcement of the recommendations of the Committee should take place within seven days of their being in your hands.

7. The *satyagrahi* prisoners should be discharged to-morrow. Fines and execution orders should be stopped, and fines already collected and confiscations should be returned.

I gather from the conversation with Mr. Gibson that he will not interfere with whatever you may do in connection with the Notification of the 26th December.

If you cannot see your way to accept my suggestions before noon to-morrow, my fast will commence from that time and will continue till after acceptance.

I trust that you will not regard the language of my letter to be stiff. And if I do use stiff language or my action appears to be such, I claim that right in connection with you. My father had the privilege of serving the State when your grandfather was its Chief. Your father regarded me as father to him. Indeed, at a public meeting he called me even his *guru*, but I have been *guru* to no one; therefore, I have never regarded him as disciple. You are, therefore, as son to me. It is possible that you do not regard me as father. If you do, you will accept joyfully my submission in a moment and, in addition, you will express your regret for what has befallen your people after 26th December. You will please not consider me your or the State's enemy. I can never be anybody's enemy and have never been. I have implicit faith that in the acceptance of my submission to you lies your good, your prestige and your duty. If you will observe that in some of my suggestions I have gone outside the four corners of the Notification of the 26th December, such departure will be found to be merely superficial. You will note that in not interfering with

your nominations of the persons outside the Parishad, I have had solely in view your prestige. Thus, the departure is purely in favour of the State. If the other departures may not be so considered, they are solely due to what I have considered your breach of promise. In my view, they are for the protection of both the parties and the people and for the purpose of preventing another breakdown of the settlement.

In conclusion, I give you my word of honour that if I am then alive, I shall critically examine the report that the Reforms Committee may prepare. If I am not, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel may do so, and the examination will be such as to make sure that no damage is done to your prestige or to the State or your people.

I am sending a copy of your letter to Mr. Gibson. I am not handing this letter to the Press, and I entertain the hope that you will kindly adopt my suggestion so that I may never have to publish this letter.

May God bless you and give you right guidance !

Blessings from  
MOHANDAS

#### IV

#### GANDHIJI'S NOTE TO RESIDENT

Anand Kunj,  
Rajkot: March 2, 1939

Dear Mr. Gibson,

With the deepest sorrow, but as a matter of sheer duty, I have just sent to H. H. the Thakore Saheb a letter of which I enclose a copy herewith. I have not been able yet to translate it. In order to save time, therefore, I have sent you only a copy of the Gujarati original. I hope, however, to send English translation in the course of the day. You will then, please, regard it as the only authorized translation, or as if it were the original.

May I bespeak your full-hearted co-operation, in so far as it lies in your power, in the prosecution of my proposal ?

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. GANDHI

#### V

#### THAKORE SAHEB'S REPLY

Amarsinhji Secretariat,  
Rajkot State  
3rd March 1939

My dear Mahatma Gandhiji,

I received your letter yesterday and noted the contents with greatest regret. You have already been assured that the Notifica-

tion No. 50, which I published on 26th December, will stand good. The suggestions you make regarding personnel of the Committee are not in accordance with the terms of that Notification, and I do not feel justified in accepting them or your other suggestions. The responsibility of ensuring that the Committee shall consist of suitable members, truly representative of various interests of the State, rests on me as Ruler of Rajkot, and it is a responsibility of which I cannot divest myself. In the best interests of my State and my people, it is impossible for me to allow any one else to have the final decision in a matter of such vital importance. As I have previously assured, it is my earnest hope that the Committee may be able to start work in a calm atmosphere at the earliest possible moment so that there may be no delay in introducing such reforms as may be found to be necessary.

Yours sincerely,  
DHARMENDRASINH

## VI

### “ADDS FUEL TO THE FIRE”

“If the Thakore Saheb’s letter is the last word, my fast has to continue to the end of my time on this earth. I shall undergo the ordeal, I hope, with a cheerful heart, and I know also that what may not take place in my life-time will take place, without the shadow of a doubt, after the sacrifice.”

*Commenting on the Thakore Saheb’s reply, Gandhiji said (March 3):*

I am sorry for this reply. I cannot help saying that the Thakore Saheb has been badly advised. The reply adds fuel to the fire. Considerations urged in the letter became irrelevant when he gave the following note to the Sardar :

‘Agreed seven members of the Committee mentioned in clause 2 of the said announcement of this date are to be recommended by Sardar Patel and they are to be nominated by us.’

The language is unequivocal and emphatic. The Thakore Saheb, in giving that note, divested himself of the responsibility of choosing the nominees. The responsibility of nomination rests with the Thakore Saheb, but the nomination is conditioned by the fact that the names had to be recommended by the Sardar. There-

fore, the responsibility for making suitable recommendations devolved upon the Sardar and that devolution took place at the will of the Ruler of Rajkot. It was open to the Ruler and his advisers to negotiate with the Sardar, if they did not find his recommendations suitable and to induce him to make other recommendations; but if the Sardar could not be so persuaded, the Thakore Saheb, having divested himself of the responsibility to choose a nominee, had to accept the Sardar's recommendations. Reason also suggests that if the reference to the Committee was to be made good, it must be a Committee of the choice of those for whose sake the notification containing the reference had become necessary. Otherwise, what was given with one hand would be taken away with the other.

If the choice is left to the Ruler and his advisers, there is nothing to prevent them from appointing a Committee which would make recommendations such as would completely nullify the spirit of the reference. However, the matter is past argument. If the Thakore Saheb's letter is the last word, my fast has to continue to the end of my time on this earth. I shall undergo the ordeal, I hope, with a cheerful heart, and I know also that what may not take place in my life-time will take place, without the shadow of a doubt, after the sacrifice.

## VII

### GANDHIJI'S SECOND LETTER

*[Translated from original Gujarati by Gandhiji]*

Maherban Thakore Saheb,

Your letter is painful. You seem to attach no value to a promise. You are acting like a man who promises a donation and then goes back upon the promise. Have you not given such by your Notification of 26th December? Donations are but one of the attributes of princeship, as they are also its ornament. By that Notification you promised a big donation. Its very core includes surrender of the right of making the choice of names of members of the Reforms Committee. But, in the case in point,

you surrendered that right by a special letter addressed to Sardar Vallabhbhai in his capacity as representative of the Parishad. Your letter of to-day cancels that surrender. This action of yours does not befit you. I believe that compliance with my suggestion contained in my yesterday's letter is necessary for the due fulfilment of your promise.

May God move you to such compliance! It behoves you to give effect to the suggestion I have sent you to-day through the Khan Saheb. Inasmuch as civil disobedience now remains definitely suspended, it seems to me to be your obvious duty to discharge the civil disobedience prisoners.

Rashtriya Shala, Rajkot.  
3rd March 1939

Blessings from  
MOHANDAS

### VIII

#### "AN UNKIND CUT"

"My fast I hold to be part of my mission. At the end of it, whatever happens, there will be peace. The alternative to the breakdown of negotiations would have been a revival of the struggle with increasing bitterness of strife."

*Commenting on the Rajkot Durbar's Communiqué, Gandhiji said (March 5):*

It has grieved me to read the Rajkot Durbar's *Communiqué*. Those who have studied the documents already published will have no hesitation in agreeing with me that the *Communiqué* is full of evasions and misrepresentations of facts. I have neither the energy nor the wish to examine the *Communiqué* in detail. But one omission in my letter to the Thakore Saheb and in the Press statements requires explanation. That is in connection with my reference to atrocities in my telegrams which brought me to Rajkot. The omission was due to my desire to be absolutely fair to the Khan Saheb and his subordinates who are primarily responsible for dealing with the actions of civil resisters. But the fact that the omission, instead of being appreciated, has been turned against me, compels me to put the actual state of affairs before the public.

After my visit to the two jails, I told the Khan Saheb that I was much moved by the statements made by the

prisoners. I told him that I was inclined to believe the allegations made by the prisoners, some of whom were personally known to me and many of whom enjoyed in society a status which entitled them to have their evidence believed until it was proved to be untrue. I, therefore, told the Khan Saheb that the allegations were so serious, covered such a wide field, and affected so many persons that the only way I could do justice to the State was to suggest a judicial inquiry by an impartial tribunal. For his own part, he at once accepted the suggestion and, at my request, even mentioned the names of certain English officials to conduct the judicial inquiry. And it was agreed between us that I should prepare a charge-sheet which he would examine and answer and, on his part, he would prepare a counter charge-sheet which I would examine and answer. After this process had been gone through and agreed charges eliminated, the balance, if any was left, would be referred to the tribunal.

The Khan Saheb also asked me what reparation I would make if the charges of utter falsehoods, which he proposed to make against the civil resisters, were found to be true. I said that if a representative of the civil resisters was proved to be guilty of falsehoods, I would entirely withdraw from the struggle, and, so far as I was concerned, I would treat the claim for responsible government by persons capable of falsehoods to have lapsed. The Khan Saheb seemed to be more than pleased over the unhesitating reparation that I had offered.

I hope to make good the promise I have made to the Khan Saheb, if I survive the ordeal that I am going through. Even on my sick-bed, I am organizing collection and collation of evidence already received. I have before me more than 175 statements made by sufferers and others.

The charge against me of breach of faith is an unkind cut. My fast I hold to be part of my mission. At the end of it, whatever happens, there will be peace. The alternative to the breakdown of negotiations would have been a revival of the struggle with increasing bitterness of strife.



## IX

## A MISUNDERSTANDING CLEARED

*Gandhiji issued the following statement to the Press (March 3):*

There is a misunderstanding about a certain telegram received by me at Segaoon, of which I made use in the first Press note I issued on the eve of my coming to Rajkot. I did not think it was necessary for me to refer to that telegram. On my attention being drawn to the fact, I immediately discovered that I should have inserted in my Press note the telegram received from Shri Nanalal Kalidas Jasani Rangoonwala on February 24, reading :

“The State granted our request to allow Mohanbhai Gadhdawala and myself to visit the Tramba, Sardhar and Rajkot jails. There were inconveniences which were mended by the State authorities. There shall be no differentiation in treatment between the Sardhar and Rajkot prisons. Glad to inform you that fasting has terminated.”

It will be recalled that one of the telegrams received by me from the First Member made mention of this telegram and said that the telegram received from Shri Nanalal would show that the fasting was unjustified.

On my coming here, I discovered that the omission by me to reproduce this telegram gave rise to the rumour that Shri Nanalal had come to the decision that the fast was not justified. There was no mention in this telegram to me to the effect that the fast was not justified. It was unnecessary to say in the telegram that the fast was justified, because the sender of the telegram and other friends were trying to find out a remedy for dealing with the situation.

It has become necessary for me to clear this misunderstanding because there is an atmosphere of suspicion and disturbance which may interfere with the working of the *satyagraha* machinery. Therefore, it has become necessary for me, in the interest of the cause, to inform my co-workers that there is absolutely no cause for suspicion that Shri Nanalal had come to a hasty decision about

he fast. His whole reason for intervening was to find out if he can be of any assistance in terminating the hunger-strike of the prisoners, and we now know the result of this intervention.

## X

## THE SETTLEMENT

*Mr. Gibson's letter conveying the full text of the Viceroy's letter to Gandhiji (March 7):*

My Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I wired your reply to the Viceroy yesterday and I am now instructed to convey the following message to you from His Excellency :

"Thank you very much for your message which I have just received. I understand your position.

"It is clear from what you tell me that what counts with you essentially in this matter is your feeling that there has been a breach of faith. I realize that doubts may be entertained as to the meaning which should be attached to the Thakore Saheb's Notification, as amplified by his subsequent letter to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and it seems to me that the best way in which these doubts can be resolved is to refer their interpretation to the highest judicial authority in the land, that is to say, the Chief Justice of India. I would, therefore, propose, with the consent of the Thakore Saheb, which I understand is forthcoming, to consult this high authority, as to the manner in which the Committee should be composed in accordance with the terms of the Notification and the Thakore Saheb's letter referred to above. After this, the Committee would be set up accordingly, and it would further be provided that should any difference arise between the members of the Committee as to the meaning of any part of the Notification on which they were to make recommendations, this question would also be referred to the same high authority whose decision would be final.

"I fully believe that this, combined with the Thakore Saheb's assurance that he will carry out the promises contained in his Notification, and with my own assurance that I will exert my influence to see that he does so, will be sufficient to allay any apprehensions which have assailed you, and that you will join with me in feeling that every precaution has been taken to ensure fair dealing and that you will allay the anxiety of your friends by abandoning any further strain upon your health.

"As I have already told you, I shall be very glad to see you here and discuss matters with you so that any misapprehensions may be removed."

Yours sincerely,  
E. C. GIBSON

### GANDHIJI'S REPLY

March 7, 1939

Dear Mr. Gibson,

I have received your kind letter, and as I wanted some points to be cleared you were good enough to come to me and discuss them. In my present state I want to conserve my energy and, therefore, I do not want to reduce them to writing. I want you please to write the following message to His Excellency :

"I am grateful to you for your prompt reply which was delivered to me at 10.45 A. M. to-day. Although, naturally, it leaves several things unsaid, I regard your kind message as sufficient warrant for breaking the fast and ending the anxiety of millions who are following the fast with their prayers and such efforts as they can make to hasten a settlement.

"It is only proper for me to say that those things which are not mentioned in your message are not waived by me, but that I should expect satisfaction on them. They can, however, await mutual discussion. As soon as doctors permit me to undertake a journey to Delhi, I shall do so.

"I thank you once again for taking up so promptly and so sympathetically the matter that necessitated my fast."

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. GANDHI

## “A GOOD ENDING”

“There is a growing school of public opinion in India which is convinced that the Princes are beyond reform, and that there would be no free India unless this ‘relic of a barbaric past’ is done away with. I honestly differ from them and as a believer in non-violence and, therefore, in the goodness of human nature, I could not do otherwise. They have a place in India.”

*Gandhi issued the following statement to the Press after breaking his fast (March 7):*

In my opinion, this good ending is an answer to the prayers of millions. I claim to know my millions. All the 24 hours of the day I am with them. They are my first care and last, because I recognize no God except the God that is to be found in the hearts of the dumb millions. They do not recognize His presence; I do. And I worship the God that is Truth or Truth which is God through the service of these millions.

But I also know I had the prayers and sympathy of others all the world over. And there was a persistent effort of the intelligentsia in order to bring about an honourable understanding and a speedy end of this fast. Englishmen have co-operated as well as Indians. Politically speaking, it is His Excellency the Viceroy who is responsible for the settlement.

I know Englishmen do not understand the method of fast, especially on what would appear to be a purely political issue. They often feel disgusted with such method. I know also there are Indians who do not appreciate the method of fast. I hope, when I am strong, to write about ‘The Fast Method,’ because over 50 years’ experience has convinced me that in the plan of *satyagraha* it has a definite place.

The reason why I bring the fast here is that I want to give full valuation to the Viceregal gesture, and he represents the English mind. It was open to him—and I at least would have justified his action—if he had said: 'I do not understand this man's actions. There seems to be no end to his fasts. There must be a stop somewhere. He will give no guarantee that this is his last fast. We propose even this time not to parley with him, until he has broken his fast.'

I know that, ethically speaking, he would have been wrong if he had taken up that attitude, but, politically speaking and examining the position from the English stand-point, I would have justified his action if he had been unbending. I am hoping that such a good ending and appreciation, even of a method which the English mind cannot understand, will produce not merely the righting of what I have held to be a primary wrong, but it will clear the atmosphere and help also in the general solution of the States' problem.

I do not mean to say that all States will have to follow the Rajkot precedent. Rajkot is a speciality and must be regarded as an isolated case. There are States whose problems must be considered on their merits. But public attention is rivetted on the problem of the States. I hope it will be recognized that it is a problem which does not brook delay.

I would like the Princes to believe me when I assure them that I came to Rajkot as their friend and as a cent per cent peace-maker. I saw that civil resisters in Rajkot were, and could not but be, unyielding. Their honour was at stake. I had tales of atrocities poured into my ears. I felt that the basest human passions would be let loose, if I allowed civil resistance to go on from day to day. That would have resulted in a bitter feud not merely between Rajkot and the civil resisters but—as the human mind works and even jumps from the particular to the general—there would have been a bitter feud between the Princes and the people.

I know that, even as it is, there is a growing school of public opinion in India which is convinced that the

Princes are beyond reform, and that there would be no free India unless this 'relic of a barbaric past' is done away with. I honestly differ from them and, as a believer in non-violence and, therefore, in the goodness of human nature, I could not do otherwise. They have a place in India. It is not possible to wipe out all the traditions of a hoary past. I, therefore, hold that if the Princes will read from the lessons of the past and will respond to the time spirit, all will be well. But it will not do to tinker with the problem. They will have to take heroic measures. They need not follow the Rajkot model, but they will have to part with real and substantial powers in favour of the people.

There is, so far as I am aware, no *via media* of saving the situation and saving India from a terrible blood feud. I dare not publish the letters that I have received about the Princes, but of this I shall have to speak more later. In my present weak state of health, it is an effort to give this statement. And yet whilst the effect of the fast is on me and whilst I am full of what I call spiritual exaltation, I must give out the best of my thoughts just now.

Then, there are the Bhayats and Girasias. They pleaded with me their case. I told them that they had my sympathy. They could count upon me as their friend. I want them also to live as Girasias and Bhayats, but they will also have to march with the times. They will have to remodel their lives. They will have to feel one with the people over whom they exercise a kind of sway.

Our Mussalman friends came to me, and I had no hesitation in telling them without any argument that their special interests would be safeguarded, that if they wanted separate electorates in Rajkot with reservation of seats, I would see to it that they got them. Without their asking, they would have had ample guarantees for the fullest protection of their religious freedom. And I told them that if they insisted upon their nominations, I would not resist them. It is necessary for me to say this in order to ease their minds and to ease the minds of the Mussalmans throughout India. I want them to feel that neither I nor the Congress can ever be guilty of diminishing an

iota of the safeguards that they may need for their full growth and for the protection of their faith and culture.

I must explain why I have released for publication only the Viceregal telegraphic message received to-day at 10.45 a.m. and my reply. There is an allusion to previous messages in these two communications. With the full consent of the Viceroy, I am refraining from publishing those communications. His Excellency has not prevented me from publishing them. I know that he does not believe in sending secret communications to public men, but, for reasons which I need not go into, I felt the force of the argument that for the sake of the cause it is not wise to publish them. I hope that it will never be necessary to publish them. There are in my communications allusions which were relevant, but they are not for the public. Hence, the responsibility for withholding previous communications is solely mine.

One word about the Congress. My heart is there, but I see that I will not be able to reach there. I am still too weak, but, what is more, if I am to give the finishing touch to the Rajkot matter and what it implies, I must not divide my attention between Tripuri and Rajkot. I must concentrate my attention solely on Rajkot at present. I have work to do here. I must hasten to Delhi as soon as I am able. I only hope that all will go well in Tripuri.

It is a strange experience for me to miss the Congress session through all these years. But it is a good thing. Why should I be so proud as to think that nothing serious can be done without me? There are leaders in Tripuri who are every whit as courageous, as self-sacrificing and as devoted as I am. I have no doubt, therefore, that though another policy may be evolved, there will be no acrimony and there will be no violence in their thoughts, in their words and in their deeds.

The last thing I would like to say is that I want to thank the Press correspondents who have been with me during all these anxious days. I have felt proud of them. They have carried out the best traditions of good journalism. They have not been news-mongers, but they have been fellow messengers of peace with me. They

have shown me the greatest consideration. They have never pestered me.

I should like also publicly to thank my medical friends who have so ungrudgingly attended upon me.

I hope that the prayers of those who believe in them will still continue. In a way, my work begins from now. I begin to lead an earthly life. I have to carry on delicate negotiations. I do not want to lose the good-will with which I am surcharged at the present moment. I think of the Thakore Saheb, I think of Durbar Shri Viravala. I have criticized them, but only as a friend. I repeat that I am in the place of a father to the Thakore Saheb. I have done no more towards him than I could have done to my truant son. I would like them to understand the significance of what has gone on in front of them, and it would be a noble ending to this fast if I discover that they have appreciated all that I have said as from a friend, and that there will be the response from them that I expect.

Rajkot is the hub of Kathiawad, and if Rajkot is given a popular government, other States in Kathiawad will, of their own accord and without any further civil resistance, fall in line. There is no such thing as perfect coincidences on this earth. Its beauty lies in its multitudinous variety. There will be, therefore, variety of constitutions in Kathiawad States. But let the trunk be true.



## A GOD-GIVEN FAST

“‘Happiest are those that plunge in the Fire, the lookers-on are all but scorched by flames.’”

To have been deprived of the privilege of being near the Sacrificial Fire that is burning in Rajkot is no small calamity. But if a Sacrificial Fire is no calamity, the deprivation is none. And where hearts are beating in unison, distances of time and space are annihilated.

But speaking purely physically, I am working under a handicap, and as I have been away from Segaon these days I could not produce a diary of events to demonstrate to doubters that the Fast is a God-given Fast. That it is purer than any previous fast undertaken by Gandhiji—excepting the ‘Three Weeks’ Fast of 1933—should be clear to the meanest understanding. It has been described as a ‘self-imposed death.’ Indeed it is, if Jesus’ was a self-imposed death resolved upon in order that others may live. We erring mortals die every minute of our lives, every minute that we try to live against the dictates of the divine in us. Every breach of a pledge or a good resolution is death, but it is pardonable death, if mortal man confesses the breach and attributes it to his own weakness. It becomes unpardonable suicide, when mortal man glories in the breach. Gandhiji’s ‘self-imposed death’ is meant to awaken those who are rushing headlong towards that unpardonable suicide. ‘Unpardonable’ I call it—not by us, but by God who declared: ‘Vengeance is Mine; I will repay.’ Man can but pray. In our indignation, we may feel the intensity of that human wrath which rises out of the heart of an agonized humanity.

But let us put aside our indignation and we will not fail to see that it is no such cruel process, it is a divine

Sacrificial Fire which kindles divine sparks in us and burns up the impurities that are not of God. All iniquities and impurities are being consumed there, and to the extent that we can realize it, to that extent we will rejoice and cease to be indignant.

And, how can such a thing be other than God-given? But as I have said, if I had been physically with Gandhiji at Segaoon and Rajkot, I should have demonstrated that it is God-given, by describing every step that led on to it. However, even whilst I was here I had the proofs coming to me. That what was happening in Rajkot and other States, was a continuing agony every one knew—every one who studied his writings. But that he rejoiced in the agony I saw in one of his letters which he ended up with these words :

“There is conflagration all round.

But you know that

“Happiest are those that plunge in the Fire,  
The lookers-on are all but scorched by flames.”

That the idea of having to go through the Fast was farthest from his mind when he set off for Rajkot, will be apparent from what he wrote to me on the 26th :

“You must not be anxious. I miss you on this journey. I am going there as God is taking me there. Within me is joy, hope. Who knows if the prospect is no more than a mirage? I know that I will not return from Rajkot with hope blasted.”

The next day he wrote :

“How mysterious are the ways of God! This journey to Rajkot is a wonder even to me. Why am I going, whither am I going? What for? I have thought nothing about these things. And if God guides me, what should I think, why should I think? Even thought may be an obstacle in the way of His guidance.

“The fact is, it takes no effort to stop thinking. The thoughts do *not* come. Indeed, there is no vacuum—but I mean to say that there is no thought about the Mission.”

The thing came as in a flash on the night of the 2nd March, as another letter tells me, after the last of that series of agonizing talks with Durbar Viravala, which was

the limit. Something from within said : The final sacrifice must be offered.

Why, then, did he utter these words in the statement he made on the eve of his departure for Rajkot ?—

“An honourable mutual understanding is impossible, if faith becomes a valueless article. Life to me becomes a burden when I find myself witness of a breach of faith, as I happen to be in this case.”

Did he know? No more than he knew that he would have to enter “a perpetual fast unto death from food of any kind on the 20th September 1932,” when on the 13th November 1931 in London he uttered the prophetic words :

“I want to say with all the emphasis I can command that, if I was the only person to resist this thing (Separate Electorates for Harijans), I will resist it with my life.”

Even so he knew of this fast, in the sense that he is not known to utter a word in vain. But if he knew, it was God who made him utter those words that knew, not he.—*Mahadev Desai*.

## ITS MEANING

"As a *satyagrahi* I must always allow my cards to be examined and re-examined at all times, and make reparation if an error is discovered."

A critic may say:

"What have you gained to warrant the breaking of your fast? Not one of the terms of your ultimatum to the Thakore Saheb has been fulfilled, except the release of prisoners. But you never took the fast for their release."

On the surface, this argument is perfect. It is consistent with a vengeance. My answer is: 'The letter killeth; the spirit giveth life.' The life-giving fact is that Rajkot has become an all-India issue and the place of the Thakore Saheb has been taken up by the Viceroy, whose word I have no reason to doubt. Even if the Thakore Saheb had granted all my terms, I should not have been sure of due fulfilment, though I would have been obliged to accept them. What I have deliberately put in doubt is the meaning of the famous letter given to the Sardar. In my ultimatum, I had acted on the assumption that it bore only one meaning. But as a *satyagrahi* I must always allow my cards to be examined and re-examined at all times, and make reparation if an error is discovered. Hence, my reading of the settlement is that God has given me much more than I had ever expected. Time will show whether my claim is justified.

## TO THE PEOPLE OF RAJKOT—I

“Responsible government will come, but will the people be able to shoulder the burden and rise equal to their task? If they are to give a proper account of themselves, they will have to begin preparing from to-day. ... Every citizen of Rajkot will have to contribute his or her mite, if success is to crown our efforts.”

*The following is translation of an appeal issued in Gujarati by Gandhi :*

Through the grace of God, the object of my coming to Rajkot has been fulfilled. The Thakore Saheb and with his consent the Paramount Power have given assurance that the Thakore Saheb's word will be honoured and Rajkot will have a constitution in terms of the Notification of 26th December 1938. This is the simple and commonsense interpretation of the telegraphic communications between H. E. the Viceroy and myself. The result has surpassed all my expectations. The honour of both the ruler and the ruled has been vindicated and the sufferings of the people have borne fruit. Let us all offer our thanks to the Almighty. Such a happy ending would have been impossible without His grace and intervention.

I would not go into the other points mentioned in my letter to the Thakore Saheb. I have not given them up. It should be sufficient for all concerned to know, that I am aware of the fact that restrictions on the Press and other repressive measures have not been withdrawn. My efforts for their withdrawal continue, and I am sure they will go shortly.

Let us not indulge in exultation over this settlement. The real work will begin now only. Responsible government will come, but will the people be able to shoulder the burden and rise equal to their task? If they are to

give a proper account of themselves, they will have to begin preparing from to-day. They would not need, for this purpose, to hold meetings and deliver speeches. If meetings are held at all, they should be for the purpose of educating the public. Every citizen of Rajkot will have to contribute his or her mite, if success is to crown our efforts.

1. There should be real Hindu-Muslim unity.
2. The canker of untouchability and the distinction between high and low must be uprooted from the heart of the Hindu community.
3. It should be realized that we have no other sanction at our disposal except that of truth and non-violence. We should, therefore, understand their working in our everyday dealings.
4. The public should cultivate the spirit of corporate service.
5. Young men and women in their numbers should come forward to dedicate their lives to the service of the people.
6. We must rid ourselves of petty jealousies and bickerings and learn to be disciplined.
7. The people should shed their lethargy and occupy themselves with some useful activity like spinning, etc. Every one should take the vow of *Khadi*.
8. Those who are educated should help their illiterate brethren to read and write.

## TO THE PEOPLE OF RAJKOT—II

“People who obtain rights as a result of performance of duty exercise them only for the service of society, never for themselves. *Swaraj* of a people means the sum-total of the *Swaraj* (self-rule) of individuals. And such *Swaraj* comes only from performance by individuals of their duty as citizens.”

*The following is the translation of the second appeal issued in Gujarati by Gandhiji :*

In *Swaraj*, based on *ahimsa*, people need not know their rights, but it is necessary for them to know their duties. There is no duty but creates a corresponding right, and those only are true rights which flow from a due performance of one's duties. Hence, rights of true citizenship accrue only to those who serve the State to which they belong. And they alone can do justice to the rights that accrue to them. Every one possesses the right to tell lies or resort to *goondaism*. But the exercise of such a right is harmful both to the exerciser and society. But to him who observes truth and non-violence comes prestige, and prestige brings rights. And people who obtain rights as a result of performance of duty exercise them only for the service of society, never for themselves. *Swaraj* of a people means the sum-total of the *Swaraj* (self-rule) of individuals. And such *Swaraj* comes only from performance by individuals of their duty as citizens. In it, no one thinks of his rights. They come, when they are needed, for better performance of duty.

Whilst I was expounding these views to a meeting of workers, it was decided that volunteers should be called for who would go to the villages and tell the people what under *Swaraj* they would be expected to do. Thus, men or women, who would go to the villages, would tell the village people that it would be their duty to keep their villages clean and make them self-supporting. They

must not expect the Swaraj Government to do these things for them. Our villages are on the verge of destruction owing to the disappearance of village industries. They can be revived only by a revival of village industries. Among these industries, the spinning-wheel occupies the centre. The others easily arrange themselves around the wheel. If the people of Rajkot realize their duty, they would wear *Khadi* of their own spinning. Thus, everybody will learn the value of industry, and if all will engage in industries conducive to the welfare of the State, several lakhs of rupees will be saved for the people by the people. And it can be shown that by putting into practice the ideal of self-help and self-sufficiency, they will have to pay the lowest taxes and realize a greater degree of happiness in the sum than is possible under any other system. Those who labour for the State pay their taxes just as much as those that pay them in coin. Coins are but a measure of labour performed. They have no other value. If I buy a rupee worth of flour, I have paid for the labour of cultivation, carrying and grinding. Therefore, the real owner of wealth is one who puts in a certain amount of labour with a conscious productive aim. It is the same thing whether I pay the State one rupee or its equivalent of labour as tax. Often, it will be found that payment in labour is of greater value to the State than payment in coin. Payment in labour invigorates the nation. Where people perform labour voluntarily for the service of society, exchange of money becomes unnecessary. The labour of collecting the taxes and keeping accounts is saved and the results are equally good.

Every man and woman should be educated along the lines mentioned above. The property of the State is the property of the people. The Thakore Saheb is their trustee. As trustee, the Thakore Saheb and other members of his family should perform their duty. Through the performance of their duty to the State, they earn the right of taking a certain amount of money from the State. If the ruler and the ruled perform their duty in this way, there is no room for mutual bitterness.



Under responsible government, every one, from the king to the poorest citizen, must prosper. Under *Swaraj*, based on non-violence, nobody is anybody's enemy, everybody contributes his or her due quota to the common goal, all can read and write, and their knowledge keeps growing from day to day. Sickness and disease are reduced to the minimum. No one is a pauper and labour can always find employment. There is no place under such a government for gambling, drinking and immorality or for class hatred. The rich will use their riches wisely and usefully, and not squander them in increasing their pomp and worldly pleasures. It should not happen that a handful of rich people should live in jewelled palaces, and the millions in miserable hovels devoid of sunlight or ventilation.

Hindu-Muslim differences, untouchability, vertical differences between high and low, these must not be. I have referred to these in the previous leaflet. It is necessary here, perhaps, to say a word about the Girasias and the Bhayats. They are also a limb of the people. *Swarajists* have to show to them that they have nothing to fear from the former. In non-violent *Swaraj*, there can be no encroachment upon just rights; contrariwise, no one can possess unjust rights. In a well-organized State, usurpation should be an impossibility and it should be unnecessary to resort to force for dispossessing a usurper. But some Girasia friends have begun to fear the Congress. But if they use their *giras* as trustees and are or become industrious, they have no cause for fear. The Congress cannot keep its prestige if it tramples upon just rights. Its prestige is solely due to its ceaseless efforts to secure universal good. The conference of the Girasias is in session at Rajkot at the present moment. They had an orderly procession to-day, part of which I witnessed from my bed. A volunteer wrote down for me the maxims inscribed on their banners. They are so good as to arrest attention. Here they are :

1. Educate yourselves, abstain from spirituous liquors and cultivate simplicity.
2. Girasdars believe in constructive programme.

3. Say not mine is right, but say what is right is mine.
4. Avoid pomp, jealousy and bad habits.
5. We do not believe in encroaching upon other people's rights.
6. It is our duty to protect the afflicted.
7. Forgiveness is the virtue of the strong.
8. Speak only that which has value and never a word thoughtlessly.
9. Be manly if you will be free.

May the association have the strength to put their maxims into practice !

The programme that I have sketched above can be carried out only if Rajkot puts forth worthy young men and women for it. They must have faith in it. We have not sufficiently cultivated the habit of silent service. We must cultivate it. I asked for a band of such silent workers at yesterday's meeting. They gave me their names. If they have a living faith in truth and non-violence, and will do their work with full concentration, the people of Rajkot will certainly be able to shoulder the responsibility that is coming to them. The names that were given to me are as follows :

1. Shri Uchhrangrai N. Dhebar
2. „ Jethalal H. Joshi
3. „ Popatlal P. Anada
4. „ Ramjibhai Manekchand Doshi
5. „ Saubhagyachand Virchand Modi
6. „ Jamnadas Shah

The reader will see from the names that those who have not an abiding faith in truth and non-violence have wisely kept themselves aloof. But they have assured me that they will not oppose the programme to be chalked out by this band in terms of this leaflet. They have further assured me that they will willingly perform such tasks as may be entrusted to them, if they can conscientiously do so. I congratulate these workers upon their restraint and patriotism.

## FASTING

"Fasting is a potent weapon in the *satyagraha* armoury. It cannot be taken by every one. Mere physical capacity to take it is no qualification for it. It is of no use without a living faith in God. It should never be mechanical effort, nor a mere imitation. It must come from the depth of one's soul. It is, therefore, always rare."

Fasting is an institution as old as Adam. It has been resorted to for self-purification or for some ends, noble as well as ignoble. Buddha, Jesus and Mahomed fasted so as to see God face to face. Ramachandra fasted for the sea to give way for his army of monkeys. Parvati fasted to secure Mahadev himself as her Lord and Master. In my fasts, I have but followed these great examples, no doubt for ends much less noble than theirs.

I do not propose to discuss the merit of my recent fast beyond answering a suggestion whether I left Segaoon with the knowledge that I was going to fast. I have become a coward of late for fasting. My fast in August 1933, though short-lived, was a perfect torture to me. I had prepared for death the very day I was discharged. I had made over many of my medical stores to the nurse in charge. Since then, I have dreaded fasts. The twenty-four hour annual fasts of 6th and 13th April have shown me, since then, that my system is ill able to undergo any protracted fasting. Therefore, when I left Segaoon, there could be no question of my light-heartedly thinking ahead of any fast in Rajkot. Had I made any such resolution, I was bound by a promise to friends that I should give them due notice. Thus, there could be no premeditation. It came upon me all of a sudden and out of the intense agony of the soul. The days preceding the fast were days of deepest prayer. The experience of the night before the determination to take the fast had choked me. I did not know what to do. The morning following told

me what I was to do, cost what it might. I simply could not have taken the resolution but for the belief that God wanted me to take it.

So much for the Rajkot fast.

Fasting is a potent weapon in the *satyagraha* armoury. It cannot be taken by every one. Mere physical capacity to take it is no qualification for it. It is of no use without a living faith in God. It should never be a mechanical effort, nor a mere imitation. It must come from the depth of one's soul. It is, therefore, always rare. I seem to be made for it. It is noteworthy that not one of my colleagues on the political field has felt the call to fast. And I am thankful to be able to say that they have never resented my fasts. Nor have fellow-members of the *Asbrama* felt the call except on rare occasions. They have even accepted the restriction that they may not take penitential fasts without my permission, no matter how urgent the inner call may seem to be.

Thus, fasting, though a very potent weapon, has necessarily very strict limitations and is to be taken only by those who have undergone previous training. And, judged by my standard, the majority of fasts do not at all come under the category of *satyagraha* fasts and are, as they are popularly called, hunger-strikes undertaken without previous preparation and adequate thought. If the process is repeated too often, these hunger-strikes will lose what little efficacy they may possess and will become objects of ridicule.

## REQUISITE QUALIFICATIONS

"It is never the intention of a *satyagrahi* to embarrass the wrong-doer. The appeal is never to his fear; it is, must be, always to his heart. The *satyagrahi's* object is to convert, not to coerce the wrong-doer."

The four days' fast set me thinking of the qualifications required in a *satyagrahi*. Though they were carefully considered and reduced to writing in 1921, they seem to have been forgotten. As *satyagraha*, in the form of civil disobedience, is being offered or contemplated in several States, it is necessary to reiterate the qualifications and to dispel false ideas that seem to be prevalent among many workers.

Moreover, the greatest care is necessary at the present moment when violence, not non-violence, seems to pervade the air. Indeed, it may be reasonably argued that in an atmosphere surcharged with violence, there is no scope for non-violence. This argument may be carried too far, so far that non-violence may be made wholly ineffective; whereas it is claimed to be the only effective force for counteracting violence, no matter how terrible. But when violence pervades the air, the expression of non-violence may not be through civil disobedience. And if it is to be civil disobedience, it must be hedged in by adequate restrictions. In *satyagraha*, it is never the numbers that count; it is always the quality, more so when the forces of violence are uppermost.

Then, it is often forgotten that it is never the intention of a *satyagrahi* to embarrass the wrong-doer. The appeal is never to his fear; it is, must be, always to his heart. The *satyagrahi's* object is to convert, not to coerce the wrong-doer. He should avoid artificiality in all his doings. He acts naturally and from inward conviction.

Keeping these observations before his mind's eye,

the reader will perhaps appreciate the following qualifications which I hold are essential for every *satyagrahi* in India :

1. He must have a living faith in God, for He is his only Rock.

2. He must believe in truth and non-violence as his creed and, therefore, have faith in the inherent goodness of human nature which he expects to evoke by his truth and love expressed through his suffering.

3. He must be leading a chaste life and be ready and willing for the sake of his cause to give up his life and his possessions.

4. He must be a habitual *Khadi*-wearer and spinner. This is essential for India.

5. He must be a teetotalter and be free from the use of other intoxicants in order that his reason may be always unclouded and his mind constant.

6. He must carry out with a willing heart all the rules of discipline as may be laid down from time to time.

7. He should carry out the jail rules, unless they are specially devised to hurt his self-respect.

The qualifications are not to be regarded as exhaustive. They are illustrative only.

## THE RAJKOT AWARD

From

The Hon'ble Sir Maurice Gwyer, K. C. B.,  
K. C. S. I., Chief Justice of India

To

The Secretary to His Excellency the Crown  
Representative, New Delhi

Dated New Delhi, April 3, 1939

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge your letter No. F. 6 (4)—P. (S)/39 dated the 18th of March, 1939, enclosing copies of the Rajkot Durbar Notification No. 50, dated December the 26th, 1938, and a Note sent by His Highness the Thakore Saheb of Rajkot to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on the same date, and stating that, doubts having arisen as to the meaning which should be attached to these documents, my advice was requested as to the way in which they should be interpreted. Your letter further informed me that the immediate point on which my advice was required related to the manner which the Committee, which the Thakore Saheb had undertaken to set up, should be composed; and the precise matter in dispute was thus described :

“In regard to this point the Thakore Saheb contends that, while he invited Mr. Patel to submit his recommendations as to the names of the non-official members to be appointed to serve on the Committee, he retained full liberty to make the final appointments of these members himself, that is to say, that he left himself free to accept or reject the recommendations put forward. Mr. Patel, on the other hand, contends that the Thakore Saheb, by his Note of the 26th of December, 1938, bound himself to accept all the recommendations put forward by Mr. Patel.”

I received subsequently (on March 26th) representations in writing from Mr. Patel, and from Durbar Shri

Viravala on behalf of the Thakore Saheb of Rajkot. On March 27th, Mr. Patel submitted a Reply to the representations made on behalf of the Thakore Saheb; and on March 30th Mr. Patel and Durbar Shri Viravala, at my request, were so good as to furnish me orally with certain further information which I desired to have. A number of documents, relating to the matter in dispute, were annexed to the representations submitted on behalf of the Thakore Saheb, and Mr. Patel also produced on March the 30th, certain other documents which had a bearing on the matter. I am, therefore, happy to report that all materials have been placed at my disposal which appeared to me to be necessary for the purpose of coming to a decision. I ought, perhaps, to add that a letter from yourself, dated March 30th last, informed me that Durbar Shri Viravala, Adviser to the Thakore Saheb of Rajkot, was authorized to represent the Rajkot Durbar in respect of the questions which had been referred to me.

The facts of the case, so far as they are material for the purpose of the present Reference, do not appear to be seriously in dispute. There had been discussions in the later months of last year with regard to the internal situation at Rajkot, more particularly with regard to the most effective machinery for introducing certain measures of reform into the administration of the State. These discussions had not led to any definite conclusion, and towards the end of December an emissary from Rajkot went to Bombay with certain proposals which he communicated to Mr. Patel, inviting him at the same time to visit Rajkot. Accordingly, Mr. Patel travelled to Rajkot, where he arrived on the 25th of December, taking with him the draft of a Notification, the work of another hand, which it was hoped that the Thakore Saheb might be prepared to issue. This document, or a document on the same lines, had, as I understand it, already been seen by the authorities at Rajkot, and had been considered at Bombay at a meeting between Mr. Patel and the emissary whom I have mentioned above.

On his arrival, Mr. Patel sent a letter to the Thakore Saheb in the following terms :



“25-12-1938

I have just now arrived at Rajkot. I have acquainted myself with the situation of Rajkot. Your Highness must have known from the papers the public discussions that took place in connection with the interview between the Dewan Saheb and myself in Bombay. There are strong reasons to believe that all these misunderstandings have intentionally been created for certain specified purposes, and I believe that the settlement is only thereby prevented.

If Your Highness feels that it is possible to remove this misunderstanding by our interview, I am prepared to explain the real situation.”

To this letter, the Thakore Saheb replied as follows on the same day :

“25-12-1938

My dear Sardar Vallabhbhai,

Thanks for your note received just now.

I shall be delighted if you come and have tea with me at 5 P. M. to-day.

We shall then discuss the present question in presence of my Council Members.

Yours sincerely

(Sd.) DHARMENDRASINH.”

Accordingly, Mr. Patel waited upon the Thakore Saheb at the time appointed, taking with him the draft of the Notification; and it is necessary to draw attention to the second paragraph in it. This ran as follows :

“We have decided to appoint a Committee of ten gentlemen who should be subjects or servants of our State, seven of whom would be recommended to us by Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel for nomination. The President of the Committee shall be a person appointed by us who shall be fully conversant with the State affairs and in whom we have full confidence.”

The meeting and discussion, at which members of the Thakore Saheb's Council were present, appear to have lasted for several hours, and ultimately, some time after midnight, an agreement was reached as to the terms of the Notification, which the Thakore Saheb undertook to publish in an issue of the Rajkot Gazette that day, *i.e.*, December 26th. This was done and the Notification (No. 50 of 1938-39) duly appeared. The second para-

graph in the Notification as published differed from the second paragraph of the draft, inasmuch as it was in these terms :

“We have decided to appoint a Committee of ten gentlemen who should be subjects or servants of our State, three of whom will be State officers and seven subjects of our State whose names will be declared hereafter. The President of the Committee will be a person appointed by us.”

There were certain other alterations also, but these are not material for the present purpose.

I was told that the reason for the change in the second paragraph was the Thakore Saheb's apprehension lest the mention of Mr. Patel's name in the Notification itself should be misunderstood by other Rulers, a point which Mr. Patel said he quite appreciated. The Thakore Saheb and his Council asked whether it would not be possible for Mr. Patel to make his recommendations there and then, but he explained that he was not personally acquainted with the leaders of the Reform movement, and the persons (or some of them) whom he desired to consult in this connection were in prison. I am satisfied that this was the true reason, as indeed is recognized in a letter addressed on the 12th January to Mr. Patel by Mr. M. C. Patel, First Member of the Thakore Saheb's Council, a letter to which I refer again later on.

Accordingly, the second paragraph of the published Notification stated that the names of the members of the Committee would be declared thereafter. But, according to Mr. Patel (and the correspondence bears this out), it was never suggested that any change should be made in the proposal of the original draft that seven members of the Committee should be recommended by Mr. Patel himself for nomination by the Thakore Saheb; and it was, therefore, agreed that with the publication of the Notification a letter should be written by the Thakore Saheb to Mr. Patel confirming this.

This was done and Mr. Patel informed me that when Mr. M. C. Patel came to him on the 26th December, bringing the issue of the Gazette which contained the Notification in the terms agreed upon the previous night,

he brought the letter also. This was in the following terms :

“It is agreed that the seven members of the Committee mentioned in clause 2 of the State announcement of to-day’s date are to be recommended by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and they are to be nominated by us.—(Sd.) Dharmendrasinh, Thakore Saheb, Rajkot, 26-12-38.”

I pause here to observe that the suggestion was made, though it was not at all strongly pressed, when I saw the two parties together, that this letter had been obtained from the Thakore Saheb by some form of duress. I doubt whether, having regard to the terms of reference to me, which were assented to by the Thakore Saheb, I am at liberty to take this suggestion into consideration at all; but it is right that I should say that I can see no evidence for it, and, in the letters written subsequently to Mr. Patel by the Thakore Saheb, a good deal of evidence to the contrary. I am satisfied that no suggestion of duress in any legal sense can be substantiated and that the letter was written to Mr. Patel, in the words used by Durbar Viravala himself before me, “in a friendly spirit.” This is confirmed by the terms of a letter written on the following day by the Thakore Saheb to Mr. Patel, in which he says :

“I am very thankful to you for coming to Rajkot. I appreciate very much the way in which you helped me in ending the impasse.”

The letter of December 26th was not made public, and, indeed, there was no reason why it should be. I read it as a personal intimation by the Thakore Saheb that the names which according to the published Notification were to be “declared hereafter” were still to be recommended by Mr. Patel, as the draft Notification had provided.

On January 4th 1939, Mr. Patel wrote to the Thakore Saheb recommending the names of seven persons as members of the Committee. To this letter, reply (set out in the Appendix) was sent by Mr. M. C. Patel on the 12th January. It stated that the Thakore Saheb acknowledged receipt of Mr. Patel’s letter of the 4th of

January recommending seven persons to be nominated by him to the proposed Reforms Committee, and went on to say that the Thakore Saheb approved four of the persons recommended, but objected to two of the others on the ground that they were not subjects of the State; while a third was criticized as unlikely to work usefully with independent opinion on a Committee of the kind contemplated. It was also said that, in the Thakore Saheb's view, the Mahomedans in the State should be given two seats on the Committee of ten, and that one seat should be given to the Bhayats, which I understand to be the name of a class of *zamindars* or feudatories in Rajkot. Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel replied to this letter in a letter of January 15th. He withdrew the name of one person about whom he recognized that there was a doubt whether he was a subject of the State. He declined to withdraw another who had been objected to on the same ground; and he refused also to accept the suggestions regarding the Muslims and Bhayats, though he assured Mr. M. C. Patel that the persons suggested by him would have regard to the interests both of Bhayats and of Muslims. He concluded by pointing out that there had been much delay, but that he hoped that the Committee would at once be appointed, and that he expected a reply by wire. He followed this up himself by a wire on January 19th, expressing regret that no final reply had been received to his letter. On January 20th, a wire was sent by Mr. M. C. Patel which read :

“Modified personnel of the Committee will be announced during the day.”

Notification No. 61 of 1938-39 was in fact published in the Gazette on January 21st. This, after a reference to the Notification of the 26th of December, stated that the Thakore Saheb was

“pleased to appoint the following gentlemen, representing all important interests in the State, to work along with the three officers of the State, whose names will be announced hereafter, to work on a Committee to draw up, after proper investigation, a report recommending to us a scheme of reforms with a view

to associating the people more closely with the administration of the State”;

and the names of the persons appointed were then set out.

On the day of the publication of Notification No. 61, a Press *Communiqué* was issued on behalf of the Thakore Saheb. This *Communiqué* is also set out in the Appendix, and it will be observed that, after reciting the Notification of December 26th, it proceeds as follows :

“His Highness was willing to nominate seven non-official gentlemen from among his subjects, and agreed to consider any recommendations which Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel might wish to make.”

It then sets out the reasons which had induced the Thakore Saheb not to accept the recommendations made by Mr. Patel.

This appears to be the first occasion on which the Thakore Saheb claimed in express terms the right to reject the recommendations put forward by Mr. Patel. It is true that he had dissented from those recommendations in Mr. M. C. Patel's letter of January 12th; but that letter did not in terms assert any right to reject them. Nor did Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel so read it; although in his letter of the 15th he admitted, by implication, the right of the Thakore Saheb to criticize the recommendations and expressed his own willingness to review them on good cause being shown. But the Thakore Saheb in the Press *Communiqué* of January 21st stated that he had

“agreed to consider any recommendations which Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel might wish to make.”

This is not what the letter of December 26th said. In that letter the words were :

“It is agreed that seven members of the Committee . . . are to be recommended by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and they are to be nominated by us;”

and the words which I have to construe are the words of that letter, and not those of the gloss put upon it in the *Communiqué* of January 21st.

Such are the facts of the dispute; and the point at issue will be seen to be briefly this, whether the Thakore Saheb was bound to accept Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel's recommendations, or whether he had a discretion in the matter, so that he could either accept them or reject them as he thought best. I am satisfied that there was a concluded arrangement between the two parties.

It may well be that the Thakore Saheb, by reason of the pressure of events, found himself compelled to concur in an arrangement for which he had perhaps no great enthusiasm; but that is a very different thing from the fraud or duress which in all systems of jurisprudence is held to vitiate a contract. I have, therefore, to ascertain what the parties meant by their agreement; and I have to ascertain this by reference to the language in which they have clothed their agreement, although it is permissible, and indeed necessary, to make myself acquainted with the background of the story and the circumstances in which the arrangement came to be made.

It will be observed that there is a slight difference between the language of the draft Notification and that of the letter of December 26th. The first speaks of "a Committee of ten gentlemen who should be subjects or servants of our State, seven of whom would be recommended to us by Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel for nomination by us." The second says that seven members of the Committee "are to be recommended by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and they are to be nominated by us." There is no evidence that the terms of the letter were intended to convey a different meaning from that expressed in the draft Notification, nor do I think that the two sentences mean different things, in spite of the difference of wording. In my opinion, the true construction of each document is that the Thakore Saheb undertakes to appoint the persons whom Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel may recommend, and that he does not reserve to himself any discretion to reject those whom he does not approve. He is, no doubt, entitled to criticize the recommendations and to urge reasons for reconsidering them; but, unless it can be shown that any of the persons recommended are

neither subjects nor servants of the State, Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel is to have the last word.

It is true that the appointment of all the members of the Committee is vested in the Thakore Saheb alone, even when they are recommended by Mr. Patel. A Committee of this kind, however, could scarcely come into existence in any other way, and there is nothing inconsistent between the reservation by the Thakore Saheb of the right of appointment and an undertaking by him to appoint a certain number of persons who are recommended by another. The gist of the Thakore Saheb's argument is contained in the following sentence in the written case submitted on his behalf:

"It is obvious that the word 'recommend' itself clearly indicates that it (*i.e.*, each name) is to be considered and it was open to the Thakore Saheb to reject any of the names on the ground, for instance, that any one of the names recommended was not a suitable person, was incapable or undesirable."

No such proposition can be based simply upon the use of the word "recommend," which in itself does not necessarily imply anything of the kind; it may take its colour from the context and, accordingly, all the circumstances of the case must be taken into account.

Two examples or analogies will make this clear. Thus, it is not uncommon in the statutes relating to Universities in India to provide that certain officers shall be appointed by the Chancellor after consideration of the recommendations made by specified persons or bodies; and in that case a discretion is clearly reserved to the Chancellor. In other cases, the Chancellor is to appoint from a limited number of persons similarly recommended. In these, the Chancellor's discretion is limited to a selection from among that number, nor can he reject them all and then claim to appoint some one from outside. Again, in *Rex v. Governors of Christ's Hospital* 1917, 1 K.B. 19, the Court had to consider the provisions of a charitable scheme under which persons were to be appointed for certain purposes by the Governors, some of them on the recommendation of a number of specified persons

and bodies. The Governors claimed to be entitled to exercise a discretion with regard to these recommendations; but the Court held that, having regard to the provisions of the scheme as a whole, the Governors were required to accept the recommendations made to them and were left with no discretion in the matter. I do not for a moment suggest that these examples afford a conclusive precedent for the purposes of the present Reference; though the language before the Court in the *Christ's Hospital Case* bore a close resemblance to the language which I am now considering. I only refer to them for the purpose of showing that there is no single principle which regulates cases where one person recommends and another appoints. In the case of appointments made under statutory powers, it is necessary to consider the terms of the statute; and in the case of appointments made by virtue of some contractual arrangement, it is necessary to look at all the terms of the arrangement. When the draft Notification spoke of members being recommended by Mr. Patel "for nomination," it could, in my opinion, only mean one thing. I have already pointed out that the words of the letter of December 26th are slightly different; but I am satisfied that the intention in both formulæ was the same. I have no doubt as to the meaning of the first and, in my opinion, the slight difference of language makes no difference in the meaning of the second.

Since a question appears to have arisen with regard to the appointment of the Chairman of the Committee, I think it right to say that, in my opinion, the second paragraph of the Notification of December 26th restricts the members of the Committee to ten and that, therefore, the Chairman, who is to be appointed by the Thakore Saheb must be one of the ten and not an additional member.

My terms of reference do not require me to decide the question whether the Thakore Saheb committed any breach of faith in contending for his interpretation of the letter of December 26th; and express no opinion upon it.

I set out in an appendix to this letter copies of the



different documents and letters to which I have referred.

I hope it will not be thought amiss if I venture to add a few words. I have been distressed, in the course of my examination of the documents in the case, to observe, not on one side only, the imputation of motive, based, as it seems to me, often on little or no evidence. I am constrained to observe that opinions may be strongly held without being dishonestly held, and I permit myself to hope that the Committee, when constituted, may enter upon its difficult task in an atmosphere free from accusations and recriminations. The interests of individuals and of parties are of importance, but I conceive that of no less importance are the interests of the general body of the inhabitants of Rajkot.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Sd.) MAURICE GWYER

Chief Justice of India

## HAVE I ERRED ?

"The fast is a most efficacious weapon in the armoury of non-violence. That it can be used only by the fewest possible persons is no objection to its use."

Some friends have been expostulating with me for involving myself in the Rajkot affair. I sum up their argument below :

"In giving so much attention to Rajkot to the exclusion of all else, you seem to have lost all sense of proportion. It was your obvious duty to be at Tripuri. If you had been there, things would have taken a different turn. But you chose to undertake an indefinite fast. You had no right thus to disturb national life without notice. Why should you fast to make a Prince keep his promise? The people of Rajkot were offering civil disobedience. They would have become stronger in any case, if you had not suddenly stopped the movement. Surely, democracy cannot be built by your method. And then you, who taught India to shun Viceroys and Governors and such other functionaries who used to fill us with awe, are now found dancing attendance on the Viceroy and awaiting His Excellency's pleasures, when great affairs demand your attention elsewhere. You are believed to oppose Federation, but you recognize the Chief Justice of the Federal Court and will not leave Delhi till His Lordship has delivered his Award. Truly, the ways of *Mabatmas* are strange."

To the hasty reader, this argument must make a forcible appeal. But one, who goes a little deeper into the subject and knows the working of *satyagraha*, should have no difficulty in seeing the falsity of the argument. Nor is there anything new in what I have done and am doing about Rajkot. Geographically, Rajkot is a tiny spot on the map of India, but the disturbance which I felt called upon to deal with was symptomatic of a universal malady. My endeavour in Rajkot was meant to nip the evil in the bud. I am of opinion that the result of the endeavour has so far benefited the whole of India. I acted the part of a wise general who never disregards

the slightest weakness in his defences. Kheda and Champaran are but instances in point. Whilst they lasted, they occupied the attention of the whole of India; and whilst the fight was going on, I had to devote the whole of my time and attention to them. It is a rare occurrence to have to deal with the whole front at the same time. We must distinguish between preparations for war and actual outbreak of a skirmish, be it ever so insignificant in itself. Tripuri was a preparation, Rajkot was a skirmish.

The fast is a most efficacious weapon in the armoury of non-violence. That it can be used only by the fewest possible persons is no objection to its use. It would be foolish for me not to use the talents given to me by God on the ground that others or all do not possess some of them. I have never heard it said that the use of special talents placed at the service of democracy can retard its even growth. I hold that such use stimulates it, as the Rajkot fast undoubtedly has. And why is the Rajkot fast to be condemned, if the nation benefited by the previous fasts? It is open to the critics to say that the previous ones were also criticized. So they were. But my point is that the nation gained by every one of them. What does arrest the growth of the democratic spirit is the outbreak of violence. I must ask the public to believe me when I say that if my fast did nothing else, it prevented much violence.

I have no sense of shame about going to H. E. the Viceroy. I had invited him as the Crown Representative to perform his duty by intervening to enforce performance of a promise by a tributary of the Crown. I had not gone as a petitioner depending upon his mercy. It would have been churlish on my part to have sought his intervention and yet not to respond to his invitation to see him to discuss things. I have already acknowledged the handsome manner in which he acted during the fast. It was open to him to disregard it and take his time in deciding whether and when, if at all, he should intervene. But he did not do so. He recognized the nation's anxiety. And I have no doubt that his humane instinct, too, had

a share in cutting short his tour in Rajputana in order to determine his action with sufficient quickness. I have no apology to offer for my attendances on the Viceroy. It is part of *satyagraha* to lose no opportunity of converting one's opponent or coming to terms with him on strictly honourable lines. I repeated on a small scale with Lord Linlithgow what I did with Lord Halifax when, as Lord Irwin, he was Viceroy of India.

Lastly, as to my acceptance of the Chief Justice of India as the interpreter of the Thakore Saheb's letter of 26th December last sent to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The Thakore Saheb interpreted it one way, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel another way. The Viceroy suggested interpretation by the Chief Justice of India. What was I to do ? Was I to say he must not, because he was Chief Justice of a Court which was a creation of the Government of India Act ? My sense of propriety would rebel against any such objection. Federation has come no nearer by my accepting Sir Maurice Gwyer's nomination as judge of the meaning of a document. If it comes as an imposition, it will come because of our impotence born of our inability to bring into non-violent subjection the forces of violence that are growing in the country, and the increasing indiscipline and corruption in the Congress against which I have been raising my voice for the past twelve months.

It may interest the reader to know that Sir Maurice did not interpret the document in his capacity as Chief Justice of the Federal Court, but as a jurist of established repute. He who reads the judgment cannot fail to notice the pains he bestowed upon it.

## RAJKOT EVENTS

### I

Ajmer Station  
8-4-39

His Highness Thakore Saheb—Rajkot

Reaching Rajkot Sunday morning connection with action to  
be taken pursuance Award.—GANDHI

### II

(Translation)

Anand Kunj,  
Rajkot: 9-4-39

Maherban Thakore Saheb,

You must have received my wire sent from Ajmer yesterday.

It is necessary now for you to appoint the Committee in terms  
of Sir Maurice's Award.

It seems to me that you will desire to include the four names  
you have already notified. So long as the Sardar's nominees  
have a bare majority on the Committee, he will gladly accept those  
names. Thus, if the four names remain and the three officials  
are to have the right to vote, the Sardar will have to nominate  
eight members.

If you withdraw the four names, the Sardar will have to give  
seven names. Will you kindly let me have your opinion? Will  
you please also let me know who the three officials will be and of  
them who will be president of the Committee?

Blessings from  
MOHANDAS

### III

Palace, Rajkot,  
Dated, 10th April, '39

Dear Mahatma Gandhiji,

I am in receipt of your letter of 9th inst. You are right in  
supposing that I should wish for the inclusion in the Committee  
of the four gentlemen who were appointed by me to represent  
the Mahomedan community, the Bhayats and the Depressed  
classes. I consider it to be of the utmost importance that these  
communities should be effectively represented, and these particu-

lar representatives were selected after the most careful consideration. At the same time, the expedient suggested by you, *viz.*, the enlargement of the Committee merely to give Mr. Patel's nominees a majority, is hardly now practicable. What now has to be done is to take action in fulfilment of the terms of my Notification No. 50 dated 26th December 1938, in the light of the Award of the Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India who has observed that the Notification restricts the members of the Committee to ten. As stated above, it is certainly most essential that the important Mahomedan and Bhayat communities should, like other communities, have proper representation. It was with this object in view that I included in the list, published in my Notification No. 61 dated 21-1-39, the names of two suitable representatives of Mahomedan community and one of Bhayats. That you shared this view is clearly evident from the assurances which you gave to the deputations of Mahomedans and Bhayats which came to see you on February 28th, and the letter you wrote to the President of the Girasias' Association on March 11th. These assurances were, as you will remember, to the effect that the representatives already nominated on their behalf would certainly be included in the Committee. In view of these assurances, I have no doubt that you will advise Mr. Patel to include these names in the list of seven non-official members who, in accordance with the Chief Justice of India's decision, are now to be recommended by him.

I also earnestly hope that the name of Mr. Mohan Mandan will be included in his list as this gentleman, besides being a representative of the Depressed classes, has for seven years been the elected Chairman of the Rajkot Municipal Corporation and is obviously a person who should be on the Committee.

I am sure you will agree that the matter of primary importance is not to secure a majority for any particular party, but to ensure that a really representative Committee, effectively representing the various interests in the State, may now be set up consisting of persons fully qualified to undertake the very responsible duties which will devolve on them.

I am awaiting Mr. Patel's recommendations and when I have received them, I shall appoint the three official members who will, of course, have the right to vote and decide who shall be the president of the Committee.

Yours sincerely,  
DHARMENDRASINH

## IV

(Translation)

Anand Kunj,  
Rajkot : 14-4-39

Namdar Thakore Saheb,

I am able to answer your letter dated 10-4-39 only to-day.

It pains me to note that you have shaken your responsibility off your shoulders. The Muslim and the Bhayat names, to which you refer, were nominated by you. My promise, therefore, meant and could be interpreted to mean only that I, on my part, would help you to fulfil your promise, even if the Chief Justice's Award went against you. It passes my understanding how any one can interpret my promise to give what I had no power to give. I am acting only as the Sardar's and the Parishad's trustee. It is obvious that I may not give anything outside the terms of my trust. Therefore, my promise can only mean that if you desire to retain the names in question, I would help you on behalf of the Sardar to do so, subject to the majority of the Sardar's names remaining intact. I hold that it is impossible to put more meaning into my word. Unfortunately, you have taken an extraordinary step and thrust upon me the responsibility of accommodating in the Sardar's list the names of your nominees. What pains me is that you should misconstrue my promise in a manner that would render nugatory the right secured by the Sardar.

Therefore, although after your letter the only thing that remained for me was to send you seven names on behalf of the Sardar, I entreated three out of the four nominees named by you, to allow themselves to be included among the Sardar's nominees and to work as one team with the rest. But my entreaty has ended in failure. I have exhausted all effort to honour your nominations, if it were at all possible. You have mentioned a fourth name in your letter. I did not think it necessary to put Shri Mohan Mandan to the trouble of coming to me to discuss things, as he is not a Harijan.

The exclusion of the above 4 names, however, does not mean that the representatives nominated by the Sardar will not guard the special and legitimate rights of Muslims, Bhayats, Harijans or any other section. These members recognize no caste distinctions, so far as the Committee and service of the people are concerned. They have before them only the cause of the Rajkot people as a whole. They are on the Committee because the party they represent conducted the fight for the rights of the Rajkot people. You appreciated their endeavour and gave the right of nominating the names of 7 Rajkot State subjects, outside the officials, to the Sardar or the Parishad. These names are as below:

1. Shri Popatlal Purushottam Anada, B.A., LL.B.
2. „ Popatlal Dhanji Malaviya
3. „ Jamnadas Khushalchand Gandhi
4. „ Becharbhai Walabhai
5. „ Jethalal H. Joshi
6. „ Vrajlal Mayashankar Shukla
7. „ Gajanan Bhawanishankar Joshi, M.A., LL.B.

Let me once more entreat you to listen to me. You say that you are unable to enlarge the Committee. This is not right. The Chief Justice's Award does not mean any absolute obligation to limit the number of the Committee to ten. The two parties can make any alterations by mutual agreement. The Sardar is still desirous of helping you to keep your four nominees. The only condition is that the Parishad's majority should not be affected in the extended Committee. According to the Chief Justice's Award, the Sardar has a majority of 4 at present. Instead of that, for your sake and for the sake of avoiding bad blood, the Sardar is willing to reduce it to a majority of one. Can you expect anything more?

In your Notification of December 26th, the time limit for the Committee to complete and submit its report to you was fixed at one month and four days. May I remind you that the limit may not be exceeded?

During the second *satyagraha* struggle, there were confiscations, fines and other repressive measures. It is hardly necessary to remind you that these should be now cancelled.

Blessings from MOHANDAS

This letter is written by my consent and the names given here should be taken as submitted by me.

VALLABHBHAI PATEL

## V

“The very essence of democracy is that every person represents all the varied interests which compose the nation. It is true that it does not exclude, and should not exclude, special representation of special interests, but such representation is not its test. It is a sign of its imperfection.”

*Gandhiji issued the following statement to the Press on 15th April:*

There has been for me unusual delay in sending, on behalf of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, names of seven representatives to sit on the Reforms Committee in terms of the Thakore Saheb's Notification of December 26 last,



and in terms of the Chief Justice's Award. The delay shows the measure of my anxiety, as well as Sardar Patel's, to include in the list the Thakore Saheb's four nominees whose names he had published in his now defunct Notification of 21st January last. In accordance with the Award, his nominees automatically dropped out, but the Thakore Saheb could have retained them with the co-operation of Sardar Patel. My first act, on arrival in Rajkot on the 9th, was to offer to His Highness in writing the Sardar's co-operation in retaining the names. To my regret and to my astonishment, the offer was summarily rejected. The public knows from the Thakore Saheb's reply, which was handed to the Press on his behalf, in what terms it was rejected. He has allowed to be inferred that the Award left no scope for increasing the number of members of the Committee. On the face of it, this is not right. With mutual consent, there is ample scope for adjustment. The Thakore Saheb is not bound by the Award not to increase or even decrease the number on the Committee, if in wanting to do so he secures the Sardar's co-operation.

When this unfortunate decision became known to me, with the fullest co-operation of the Sardar I set about exploring means of accommodating at least two Muslim representatives and one Bhayat representative among the seven. This could not be done, unless they could see their way to agree to work as one team with the Sardar's other nominees. If this condition could not be fulfilled, the very object of giving the Sardar, *i.e.*, the Parishad, the right to select all the seven members could be easily frustrated. But, in spite of making all efforts it was humanly possible both for the Sardar and me to make, we failed and, therefore, the public will find that all the four nominees of the Thakore Saheb have been omitted.

This, however, does not mean that the Committee will not represent all interests that could have been covered by the four nominees and several other interests, not specifically represented, for I have not known a single such committee in the world which could cover specifi-

cally and sectionally all imaginable interests. The very essence of democracy is that every person represents all the varied interests which compose the nation. It is true that it does not exclude, and should not exclude, special representation of special interests, but such representation is not its test. It is a sign of its imperfection.

I do not claim perfection for the Rajkot Committee. But any attempt on the part of the Sardar to accommodate all the special interests, without the indispensable safeguard that I have suggested, would have failed to produce a constitution which could be satisfactorily worked in the interests of the whole of the people of Rajkot. I venture to suggest that the Sardar's nominees have been selected after fulfilling the first indispensable condition of team work, so that they would all make a conscientious effort to represent each in his own person the whole of the interests of the people of Rajkot. Therefore, it will be doubly the duty of the seven members to safeguard and protect all the special and legitimate rights of the Muslims, the Bhayats and the Harijans of the Rajkot State.

As to the Harijan representation, I may say that Shri Mohan Mandan, the fourth nominee of the Thakore Saheb, an estimable citizen of Rajkot though he is, is in no sense a Harijan any more than the seven nominees whose names have now been submitted to the Thakore Saheb on behalf of the Sardar.

The Girasia Association has accused me in forcible language of a breach of promise in excluding their representative from the list of seven. All I can say is that they have hopelessly misread and misunderstood my letter of March 11. I do not propose, at present, to go into the immediate circumstance in which I hastily penned my reply to their note, but it has got to be read in conjunction with the statement with which I left Wardha on what I have described as a mission of peace. I then stated, as an indispensable condition of acceptance of any permutation and combination that might be offered for the composition of the Committee, that on it the Sardar's nominees should have at least a bare majority of one.

The letter of March 11 has got to be read together with that condition. Nothing whatsoever happened on March 11 to make me waive that condition.

Assuming for the moment that I forgot to incorporate the condition in my letter, the Girasia friends would be expected to read my letter with the missing condition. But I go a step further, that to read into my letter the meaning that the Girasia Association gives it, is to frustrate the very object which was sought to be secured by the Thakore Saheb's letter to the Sardar. With the meaning that he attached to it, and which meaning the Chief Justice's Award has fully upheld, I had no right to throw away that precious right. I should be guilty of a breach of trust if I did so. It should be remembered that the fast was taken for the purpose of vindicating the Sardar's position and, therefore, if you like, to repair the breach of faith which I had imputed to the Thakore Saheb. The Award has done it. Is it to be expected that, at a time when I was proceeding to Delhi, in the full expectation of the Sardar's contention being upheld, I was to undo in advance the effect of such a happy termination of the Delhi visit? I have more than fulfilled my promise, contained in my letter of March 11 addressed to the Girasia Association, by offering to reduce to one the majority of four which the Award gives to the Sardar's nominees. I think I deserved better treatment from the Association. All their appeal should have been to the Thakore Saheb to seize the opportunity given by me of rehabilitating his nominees. Instead of choosing that obvious course, they have chosen the wrong course. I have reminded the Girasias that, when I returned from my self-imposed exile at the end of 1914, I gave them ample proof of my friendship and concern for them. They had first met me in Bhavnagar. Since then, they have been off and on seeking my guidance and advice. Many of them know that it has been always at their disposal. But no mischief is yet done. As I have said, they may rest assured that all their just rights will be respected by the Sardar's nominees.

## VI

## “WHAT HURT ME MOST”

“To my knowledge, throughout my public and private career, I have never broken a promise.”

*Gandhiji issued the following statement to the Press on 16th April:*

What has hurt me most about this evening's demonstration is that the demonstrators chose what was for me a solemn hour of the day. For years, all India knows, I have offered, without practically a breach, my evening prayers in open congregation. Why did they seek my prayer time to molest me, and what had the numerous men, women and children, who at the end of the day had come to offer their humble prayer to the one and only God of us all, done to deserve such interference? Why was it not enough, seeing that I do not go out except for prayers, to shout their slogans and wave black flags as I entered the prayer-ground? Even that would have been bad enough. But they continued vigorously to shout their slogans throughout the prayers. And they were all my countrymen. Their cries pierced me like arrows whilst I was trying to concentrate my mind on the words of the prayer. I have not attained the power of meditation which makes one impervious to all disturbances from without. They knew that if they had invited me to attend their meeting in order to witness their hostile demonstration and their wrath, weak as I have been, I would have gone there and tried to appease them.

I maintain I have not committed any breach of promise. To my knowledge, throughout my public and private career, I have never broken a promise. Here, the very motive for a breach of promise is lacking. But lest I might have made a promise, however hastily, which could bear another meaning than the one I had put upon my letter to the Bhayats of March 11, I asked as many legal friends in Rajkot as I could get together and warned them to give their unbiased opinion, and told them that

their reputation would be lost if they sought to support without full cause my own reading of my letter. I have their reasoned and unanimous opinion in my possession, fully supporting my meaning to the exclusion of any other.

I fear the demonstrators have not served their cause by their unwarranted interference with the prayer of innocent men and women. There are tremendous difficulties in the way of getting due fulfilment of the Award of the Chief Justice. I am not free to go into these difficulties at the present stage. But I appeal to those who feel grieved at my conduct, in excluding certain names from the Sardar's list, to bear with me. They may adopt all the just means to redress their grievances. The method they adopted to-day was very far from being just.

## I AM DEFEATED

“True *abimsa* lies in running into the mouth of *bimsa*. If cows could be credited with intelligence, it is conceivable that given a sufficient number of such cows, who would run into the tiger’s mouth, the latter would lose the relish for cow flesh and change his nature.”

Rajkot seems to have robbed me of my youth. I never knew that I was old. Now I am weighed down by the knowledge of decrepitude. I never knew what it was to lose hope. But it seems to have been cremated in Rajkot. My *abimsa* has been put to a test such as it has never been subjected to before.

I have given fifteen precious days to have the Committee contemplated in the Award of the Chief Justice of India. But I seem to be as far from it as ever. I have found unexpected difficulties in my path. The Award was acclaimed throughout India as a complete victory for the Sardar. But it has been effectively used against me for accusing me of a breach of promise to the Muslims and the Bhayats. The promise that the Thakore Saheb had made was, on my return from Delhi, transferred to my poor shoulders. The plain meaning of all I had said could only be that I should help the Thakore Saheb to carry out his promise, though, according to the Award, I need not. Whatever the reason might be, both the Muslims and the Bhayats relieved the Thakore Saheb of the duty of fulfilment of the promise.

Failing to placate the Muslims and the Bhayats, I sent the Thakore Saheb seven names of the Parishad. In reply, I was called upon to prove that six out of the seven names were Rajkot State subjects. One would have thought that I would at least be given an inkling of the objections. If every statement made by men presumed to be fairly honourable could be challenged, it might

take a year to finish an inquiry into the facts of each case. But I have sent the required proofs.

When I seemed to have come to the end of my resources and my patience, I sent a letter of complaint to the Resident, as the local representative of the Paramount Power, seeking his aid in terms of the Viceregal assurances given to me. He invited me to an interview. And whilst we were discussing the ways and means, an idea flashed across my mind that I should end the agony by foregoing the right of nomination of members of the Committee, and so I made what I thought, and the Resident admitted, was a sporting offer. It was that the whole Committee should be selected by the Thakore Saheb to report in accordance with the terms of the Notification of 26th December last, provided that its report should be shown to the Parishad, and that if they found that the report did not carry out the terms of the Notification, their dissenting note and the original report should be sent to the Chief Justice for his decision. The Resident sent my offer to Durbar Shri Viravala, but H. H. the Thakore Saheb has turned it down.

Agonizing experiences of the fifteen days have resulted in my making the discovery that my *ahimsa* should be voted down as failure, if the Thakore Saheb and Durbar Shri Viravala were to feel that they had to give anything under pressure from above. My *ahimsa* demanded that I should remove that feeling. And so when the opportunity came to me, I tried to assure Durbar Shri Viravala that I took no delight in invoking the assistance of the Paramount Power. Apart from *ahimsa*, my connection with Rajkot should impose that restraint on me. I assured him that my spontaneous offer to Mr. Gibson was an effort in that direction. He immediately retorted: 'But if you are not satisfied with His Highness's Committee's report, you claim the right to scrutinize the report in the light of the Notification, and if the Parishad dissents, you want to have the report and the dissent to be examined by the Hon. the Chief Justice of India. Do you call this removing the feeling of pressure? Why not trust His Highness and his adviser through and through?

You may not get all you want, but whatever you get, will be charged with his good-will and will carry a promise of full delivery. Do you know what the Parishad people have said about the Thakore Saheb and me? Is that the way of a people desiring reforms from their Prince? There was bitterness in his speech and contempt for the Parishad people. But with the sudden consciousness of my imperfect handling of *ahimsa*, instead of parrying the blow, I recognized the force of his argument as showing want of faith in the essential goodness of human nature and littleness of my own belief in *ahimsa*. And so our conversation went on and covered many proposals. But it was inconclusive. I was no nearer solution of the tangle. Nevertheless, I parted with the feeling that we had come to know each other better, and that in trying to woo Durbar Shri Viravala, I was on the right track.

And so I presented this new line of approach to my co-workers. They had more than once told me that Durbar Shri Viravala was the source of all the evil that had descended upon Rajkot, and that his removal would mean for them full *Swaraj*. I had no difficulty in showing them that what they were thinking of was good government, not self-government. At this meeting, which only took place yesterday, I told them that if they accepted my explanation of *ahimsa*, they would have to set their heart not on getting rid of Durbar Shri Viravala, but on converting him. This they could do, only if they would set about finding his good points and working at them. They must develop infinite faith in the capacity of *ahimsa* to neutralize every person of *himsa*. True *ahimsa* lay in running into the mouth of *himsa*. If cows could be credited with intelligence, it is conceivable that given a sufficient number of such cows, who would run into the tiger's mouth, the latter would lose the relish for cow flesh and change his nature. They must, therefore, shed their fear of Durbar Shri Viravala and their disbelief in the power of *ahimsa* to achieve the seemingly impossible.

They listened to this (to them) new doctrine with



attention. I did not ask them whether they were convinced. I hope they were. They would quite legitimately have asked me: 'Are you yourself so convinced of the correctness of this extraordinary attitude you have commended to us as to tear the Award to pieces and simply rely upon the goodness of Durbar Shri Viravala's heart?' If they had asked this question, I would have been obliged to say: 'I have not yet found the requisite courage. *Ahimsa* accrues only to the courageous.'

And so I have left empty-handed, with body shattered, hope cremated. Rajkot has been to me a priceless laboratory. My patience has been sorely tried by the tortuous politics of Kathiawad. I have asked the workers to confer with Durbar Shri Viravala, to forget me and Sardar Patel, and if they get enough to satisfy their least wants, they may accept the offer without reference to either of us. I have told Durbar Shri Viravala: 'I am defeated. May you win. Placate the people by giving as much as possible, and wire to me so as to revive the hope which I seem to have lost for the moment.'

## RAJKOT CORRESPONDENCE

(1)

Rajkot, 29-4-39

Mahatma Gandhi—Calcutta

I am sincerely grateful to you for rightly advising the leaders of agitation to approach me as a ruler, together with other members representing various interests who kept aloof from agitation in the State, and settle things between ourselves. If they do so, I assure you I and my officers will do our utmost to meet their legitimate and reasonable demands. Nobody realizes more than myself your anxiety in the matter, and I am most anxious to see myself in a position to send you a wire saying that we have settled things amongst ourselves and removed cause of your disappointments. My ardent desire is to come to a settlement as early as possible. The situation to-day is, sincere efforts are being made by all opinions of public and State to compose differences.

Wishing you and Kasturba in excellent health.

—THAKORESAHEB

(2)

Calcutta, 30-4-39

H. H. Thakore Saheb—Rajkot

Grateful your wire. Nothing will please me better than to find that you and your people have come to honourable understanding without any outside intervention. My wife and I keeping fairly well.—GANDHI

(3)

Rajkot, 29-4-39

Mahatma Gandhi—Calcutta

Am grateful for letter of twenty-sixth. My statement being of prior date, kindly request not to misunderstand. Am doing utmost for settlement. Ninety-nine out of hundred people in city most anxious immediate settlement. Dhebar and his few followers are an obstacle. Dhebar going Bombay consult Vallabhbhai. This is strongly resented by His Highness and public as it causes delay and brings Vallabhbhai in again in spite of your advice to keep him aloof. Most earnestly request advise Vallabhbhai not to interfere and delay settlement. Instruct Mahadevbhai to await telephone call between eight and ten p. m. to-day.—VIRAVALA

(4)

Calcutta, 30-4-39

Durbar Viravala—Rajkot

I shall not misundeistand you and shall hold you to your promise to come honourable settlement. Ask you not be angry Dhebaibhai who is good man. Neither Sardar nor I have any desire interfere with mutual honourable settlement between His Highness and people. Expect reach Rajkot about twelfth unless meanwhile you send me good news.—GANDHI

## HEART-SEARCHING

"*Satyagraha* is nothing if not a ceaseless quest after perfection. A *satyagrahi*, therefore, turns the search-light inward relentlessly to weed out the defects that may be lying hidden there still. Thereby, he increases his capacity to serve the cause he has espoused a thousand-fold."

*As on the previous occasion, before leaving Rajkot, Gandhiji called a meeting of the Parisbad workers on the evening of 23rd April, to explain to them the working of his mind and to tell them what he expected of them. The following is a gist of his talk :*

As you know, for the last fifteen days, I have striven hard to find a solution to the Rajkot tangle. But I am sorry to have to confess to you that in this I have failed. I am most grieved over our failure to arrive at a settlement with the Bhayats and the Mussalmans. But I have the conviction, and I want you to share that conviction with me, that our labour has not been wasted. Providence has its appointed hour for everything. We cannot command results; we can only strive. And so far as I am concerned, it is enough satisfaction for me to know that I have striven my utmost to discharge the duty that rested on me.

In making my 'sporting offer' to Mr. Gibson yesterday, I know I was making a big surrender. I could have demanded that the Thakore Saheb be made to implement his promise in full, and if I had insisted on it, the Paramount Power would have probably been forced to intervene. But I felt that such a course, though legitimate, would, under the circumstances, not be the best course for any of the parties concerned. And so I chose instead the alternative of putting one's head into the lap of the 'enemy.'

Let me explain to you the working of my mind in

making that offer. I hold it to be an axiomatic truth that true *ahimsa* never fails to impress itself on the opponent. If it does, to that extent it is imperfect. All the time that I have been engaged in the Rajkot question, this question has been forcing itself upon me: 'Why has our *ahimsa* failed to gain recognition from the State authorities?' In South Africa, the conceding of the first demands of *satyagrahis* did not leave any ill-feeling behind it. For eight long years General Smuts fought uncompromisingly against the claims of the Indian community. But, in the end, he recognized the justice of the claims. What was possible in South Africa should be possible in Rajkot, too. There, we were a handful of Indians pitted against the entire Boer population. Here, numbers are on your side. There, our fight was against a Government. But here, you have only to gain entrance into the heart of one man. Surely, there must be something seriously wrong about us and our *ahimsa* if we cannot even do that. To say that there can be no peace in Rajkot so long as Durbar Viravala is there, is to speak not the language of *ahimsa*, but of *himsa*. Your and mine *ahimsa* is to-day on its test. I want you to rise to the full height of the occasion.

I have been holding a silent court of inquiry within myself. How is it that I came to Rajkot on a mission of peace, but have ended by antagonizing Durbar Viravala and the State authorities? I had banked upon the ancestral family relationship existing between me and the Thakore Saheb, but instead I had to seek the intervention of the Paramount Power. 'What a lapse from grace this,' I said to myself. I feel crest-fallen and humbled. Should I absolve the Paramount Power altogether from its promise? I have been thinking furiously on these lines. But my self-confidence seems to have deserted me for the moment. However, I leave these thoughts with you for what they are worth to ponder and think over. Capacity to convert the heart of Durbar Viravala is the acid test of your *ahimsa*, as it is of mine.

The discovery I have made is this: No matter what concessions you succeed in getting from the State

authorities, it is only to the extent they are the result of a true heart conversion on their part that you will be able to enjoy or digest them. But your *ahimsa*, to be effective, must shine through your speech, your action, your general behaviour. A votary of *ahimsa* must cultivate a habit of unremitting toil, sleepless vigilance, ceaseless self-control.

Let me explain my meaning further by an illustration. Yesterday, I was engaged for five hours in a talk with Durbar Viravala. He was the same as before. But I had gone there with the dawn of a fresh spirit, as a result of all my heart-searching upon me. My reaction to him this time was different. 'We are, after all, what nature has made us, and it is no use quarrelling with nature,' I said to myself, and I tried to get as much as I could to get under his skin, to view questions from his angle. I did not mince matters and even told him some home-truths. But there was no irritation on my part or resentment on his. It was a different atmosphere. I told him that I was prepared to be locked up with him in a room till a settlement was reached. But for that mutual trust was necessary which I on my part had lost with reference to him. I feared him and distrusted him. I, therefore, invited him to remove my fears and to convert me.

I have not the time to share with you all the recollections of this interview. But there was one thing in this interview that galled me and to which I wish to draw your particular attention. He had an unmixed contempt for the Parishad people. I had noticed this before, too. But now it hurt me. Why should your *satyagraha* excite his contempt of all things? I can understand *ahimsa* inspiring a kind of fear, the sort of fear that a mother feels when her child gets offended and goes to sleep hungry without taking food. But genuine *satyagraha* should never excite contempt in the opponent, even when it fails to command regard or respect. This is not super-refinement on my part. *Satyagraha* is nothing if not a ceaseless quest after perfection. A *satyagrahi*, therefore, turns the search-light inward relentlessly to weed out the defects that may be lying hidden there still. Thereby, he increa-

ses his capacity to serve the cause he has espoused a thousand-fold.

I have asked you always to rely upon your own inner strength, instead of banking upon outside help. But I now want you to go a step further. You must now cease to look for guidance from without. *Satyagraha* should become to you an independent inspiration. It should be intolerable for you and me both that you should depend in every little thing on my advice. You must make a firm resolve that you will now arrive at a settlement according to your own inner light and conviction, and that, too, with Durbar Viravala, not without him. You may drop *ahimsa* if you find that it does not suit you or is likely to make cowards of you. But if you decide to follow the path of *ahimsa*, then, you should know that it will be an empty name unless it aims at the conversion of the heart of the opponent.

Let me offer you a few concrete suggestions in this connection. If you accept the approach that I have indicated, I would like all the seven of you, whom the Sardar has nominated, to go to Durbar Viravala and tell him that you have decided to relieve me of all responsibility in connection with Rajkot, that you would like likewise to relieve the Paramount Power, too, of its responsibility in this behalf and rely instead entirely on your capacity to induce him to implement the Notification of December 26th. Ask him to tell you as to what you should do to win his heart. Hold yourself in readiness to drain to the last the bitter cup of personal indignities and humiliations. It was only when I had learnt to reduce myself to a zero, that I was able to evolve the power of *satyagraha* in South Africa.

*Abimsa* must express itself through acts of selfless service of the masses. I cannot think of a better symbol of or medium for its expression than the spinning-wheel.

*Abimsa* is a science. The word 'failure' has no place in the vocabulary of science. Failure to obtain the expected result is often the precursor to further discoveries. It is in that spirit that you should approach and pursue your present mission.

## THE NEW TECHNIQUE

"If the function of *himsa* is to devour all it comes across, the function of *ahimsa* is to rush into the mouth of *himsa*. In an atmosphere of *ahimsa*, one has no scope to put his *ahimsa* to the test. It can be tested only in the face of *himsa*."

*The following is a summary of Gandhiji's address to the fifth session of the Gandhī Seva Sangh which met at Brindaban in Champaran, Bihar :*

I shall choose, as the text of my address to-day, one or two things I said in my statement issued on my departure from Rajkot. Kishorelal Mashruwala has rightly dwelt at length on the principal implication of *ahimsa*, viz., that the *ahimsa* in us ought to soften and not to stiffen our opponent's attitude to us; it ought to melt him; it ought to strike a responsive chord in his heart. If the function of *himsa* is to devour all it comes across, the function of *ahimsa* is to rush into the mouth of *himsa*. In an atmosphere of *ahimsa*, one has no scope to put his *ahimsa* to the test. It can be tested only in the face of *himsa*.

Now I knew all this, and I have been trying to put it into practice, but I cannot say that I have done so always with success. I cannot say that I have always succeeded in melting the hearts of my opponents. Rajkot brought a keener realization of this fact in my own mind. I was asking myself why we had failed so far in converting Durbar Viravala. The answer came straight to me that we had not dealt with him in the way of *ahimsa*. We had sworn at him, and I had shown indifference over the language of *satyagrahis*. I may have controlled my tongue, but I had not put a similar control on the speech of others.

The thing dawned on me as in a flash when during my interview with Mr. Gibson, the Resident, I made,



what he admitted, was 'a sporting offer,' of leaving it to the Thakore Saheb to form his own Committee. It was, then, that I discovered what I have called the new technique. It is not without its dangers, for the simple reason that I have had to cry a halt to everything that was going on. I had, during the Rajkot struggle, sought the intervention of the Crown Representative by approaching him during my fast, and since then I had been approaching the Resident, his representative in Rajkot. When I made the 'sporting offer', I wondered if I might not forget the Paramount Power and confine my attention to the State alone. But, perhaps, the courage is lacking for such a bold step. I have not yet made up my mind that I should not approach the Paramount Power in the Rajkot affair, that I should ask the people to tear up the Gwyer Award, and start their work with the State on a clean slate. My *satyagraha*, then, would be addressed to the State alone, and I should lay down my life in the effort to convert the authorities in Rajkot. Then, all my experiments should be confined to that unique laboratory—Rajkot. Those experiments would be more complete in terms of *ahimsa*. At the root of my faint-heartedness, if it is that, is something lacking in my *ahimsa*.

Now take the Congress corruption. Why should there be so much corruption in the Congress? How can we, with all that corruption, deserve the name 'Congressmen'? Some of you are known as 'Gandhi-ites'. Gandhi-ites is no name worth having. Rather than that why not *Abimsa-ites*? For, Gandhi is a mixture of good and evil, weakness and strength, violence and non-violence; but *ahimsa* has no adulteration. Now, as *Abimsa-ites*, can you say that you practise genuine *ahimsa*? Can you say that you receive the arrows of the opponent on your bare breasts without returning them? Can you say that you are not angry, that you are not perturbed by his criticism? I am afraid many cannot say any such thing.

You will answer back saying you never claimed to practise *ahimsa* quite to that extent. If so, I will confess that to that extent my execution was defective. *Abimsa* magnifies one's own defects and minimizes those of the

opponent. It regards the mote in one's own eye as a beam, and the beam in the opponent's eye as a mote. We have acted to the contrary.

On the question of the States, we have wanted to reform their administration and to convert the rulers, not to destroy them. But our speech has often belied our profession.

Though I made that statement about Rajkot, let me assure you that I am not going to leave Rajkot in the lurch, nor to desert my co-workers and suffer them to be demoralized. If I were to do so, it would be a sure sign of dotage, and I am aware of no such thing coming over me. On the contrary, I am praying that the workers there may grow every day in strength. I am only pleading for a radical change in the technique.

Having said this, I come to the policy of the Gandhi Seva Sangh. If you have followed what I have said so far, you have perhaps realized that we shall have to remodel ourselves somewhat. We shall have to examine ourselves critically and find out whether we have stood the test. If in doing so we are found wanting, it would be better to reduce our numbers. 20 genuine members with a heart-belief in truth and *ahimsa* are better than 200 indifferent ones. They will one day drag us to destruction, the 20 may one day increase to 200 genuine ones.

Has not corruption crept into the Sangh, too? Have not the members given way to hypocrisy, suspicion, mutual distrust? I do not know all the members, I know the names of only a few, and I am not speaking from personal knowledge; I am speaking from limited experience. Jamnalalji is unfortunately not here to-day. He has often shared with me his experience of many institutions with which he is connected. Why should it be difficult to run them smoothly? Why can't we, with any amount of confidence, fling our workers from one part of the country to another to take charge of the work there?

All this I say not to find fault with you, but in order to drive home the necessity of discipline and strict observance of our own principles. Now, a *satyagrahi* should

have a living faith in God. That is because he has no other strength but that of his unflinching faith in Him. Without that faith, how can he undertake *satyagraha*? I would ask any of you who feels that he has no such faith to leave the Gandhi Seva Sangh, and to forget the name of *satyagraha*.

How many of you have a living faith in the spinning-wheel? Do you believe in it as a symbol of non-violence? If we had that faith, our spinning would have a potency all its own. Spinning is even more potent than civil disobedience. The latter may provoke anger and ill-will, spinning provokes no such feeling. My faith in the wheel I declared 20 years ago. I am declaring it again with the added strength of my 20 years' experience. If you feel you have no such faith, I would again ask you to forget *satyagraha*.

Shri Prajapati Misra said that he had been able to introduce some spinning-wheels in villages within a radius of five miles from there. What is there in this to be proud of? Lakshmibabu has organized a good exhibition, but there was nothing there to send me into raptures. Bihar, which boasts of so many good workers, should have no home without a spinning-wheel. We can change the face of Bihar if we all know what a potent force the spinning-wheel is. I am not talking of the thousands of our starving sisters, who must spin for their bread, but I am talking of those who profess to believe in truth and non-violence. The moment they realize that spinning is the symbol of non-violence, it will serve as a beacon-light to them, it will inspire all their conduct; they will regard all waste of time as criminal, their language will be free of all offensive expression, they will not think an idle thought.

By itself, the wheel is a lifeless thing; but it becomes a living thing when we attribute certain virtues to it. Even *Ramanama* is by itself lifeless, but it has become a living symbol of the Deity because millions upon millions of people have consecrated it. Even a sinner may turn the wheel and add to the nation's wealth. I know people who have told me that the music of the spinning-wheel

has stilled their lust and other passions.

It is because I have invested the spinning-wheel with that power, that it has become so essential to the *satyagraha* of my conception in India. When I wrote *Hind Swaraj* in 1908, I had not even seen a spinning-wheel; in fact, I had even mistaken a loom for it. But even then it was for me a symbol of non-violence. Let me, therefore, repeat that I do not want people to launch *satyagraha* if they have no such belief in the spinning-wheel. They may offer *satyagraha* on their own, but I could be of no use to them.

As regards the question of corruption in the Congress, the best way in which we can help to eradicate it is by purifying ourselves. The problem, in its organizational aspect, will have to be tackled by the Congress. Truth and non-violence are no less articles of its creed than yours. The Congress can change it, you may not.

I come now to what is called the 'Gandhian' ideology and the means of propagating it. The propagation of truth and non-violence can be done less by books than by actually living those principles. Life truly lived is more than books. I do not say that we may not issue books and newspapers. I only say that they are not indispensable. If we are true devotees of truth and *ahimsa*, God will endow us with the requisite intellect to solve problems. That devotion presupposes the will to understand our opponent's view-point. We must make a sincere effort to enter into his mind and to understand his view-point. That is what is meant by non-violence walking straight into the mouth of violence. If we are armed with that attitude of mind, we may hope to propagate *ahimsa* principles. Without that, book and newspaper propaganda is of no avail. You do not know with what indifference I used to run *Young India*. I did not shed a single tear when *Young India* had to be stopped. But *satyagraha*, which it was intended to help, survived it. For, *satyagraha* does not depend on outside help, it derives all its strength from within.

## CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE

“Every act of purification, every accession of courage, adds to the strength of the cause of a people affected by a movement of *satyagraha*.”

I said at Calcutta on the 24th ultimo that Rajkot had proved a laboratory for me. The latest proof of the fact lies in the step I am now announcing. After an exhaustive discussion with my co-workers, I have come to the conclusion at 6 o'clock this evening that I should renounce the advantages accruing from the Award of the Chief Justice.

I recognize my error. At the end of my fast, I had permitted myself to say that it had succeeded as no previous fast had done. I now see that it was tainted with *himsa*. In taking the fast, I sought immediate intervention of the Paramount Power so as to induce fulfilment of the promise made by the Thakore Saheb. This was not the way of *ahimsa* or conversion. It was the way of *himsa* or coercion. My fast, to be pure, should have been addressed only to the Thakore Saheb, and I should have been content to die if I could not have melted his heart or rather that of his adviser, Durbar Shri Viravala. My eyes would not have been opened, if I had not found unexpected difficulties in my way. Durbar Shri Viravala was no willing party to the Award. Naturally, he was in no obliging mood. He, therefore, took advantage of every opportunity to cause a delay. The Award, instead of making my way smooth, became a potent cause of angering the Muslims and Bhayats against me. Before the Award, we had met as friends. Now, I am accused of having committed a breach of promise voluntarily and without any consideration made by me. The matter was to go to the Chief Justice for decision as to whether I was guilty of the alleged breach of promise. The

statements of the Muslim Council and the Girasia Association are before me. Now that I have taken the decision to renounce the Award, there is no occasion for me to answer the two cases. So far as I am concerned, the Muslims and Bhayats can have anything the Thakore Saheb may be pleased to give them. I must apologize to them for having put them to the trouble of preparing their cases.

I owe an apology to the Viceroy for the unnecessary strain I have put upon him in my weakness. I apologize to the Chief Justice for having been the cause of putting him to the labour which, had I known better, he need not have gone through. Above all, I apologize to the Thakore Saheb and Durbar Shri Viravala. So far as the latter is concerned, I must also own that, in common with my co-workers, I have harboured evil thoughts about him. I do not here pause to consider whether the charges made against him were true or not. This is not the place to discuss them. Suffice it to say, that the way of *ahimsa* was not and has not yet been applied to him.

And let it be said to my discredit that I have been guilty of playing what may be called a double game, *i.e.*, hanging the sword of the Award over his head, and wooing him and expecting him of his own free will to advise the Thakore Saheb to grant liberal reforms.

This method, I admit, is wholly inconsistent with *ahimsa*. When, all of a sudden, I made what is known as a 'sporting offer' to Mr. Gibson on 19th April, I discovered my weakness. But I had not the courage, then and there, to say: 'I do not want to have anything to do with the Award.' Instead, I said: 'Let the Thakore Saheb appoint his own Committee and then the Parishad people will examine the report in terms of the Award, and if it is found defective, it can go to the Chief Justice.' Durbar Shri Viravala detected a flaw and very properly rejected the offer, saying: 'You are still hanging the Award over my head and want to become a court of appeal over the Thakore Saheb's Committee. If such is the case, you must take your pound of flesh and no more.' I saw the force of his objection. I told him,

too, that I lacked the courage, then, to throw the Award overboard, but that I would still plead with him to come to terms with the people as if the Award was not in existence and as if the Sardar and I had also withdrawn. He promised to try. He tried in his own fashion, but not with a large heart. I do not blame him. How could I expect a large heart when he knew my faint-heartedness in clinging to the Award?

Only trust can beget trust. I lacked it myself. But, at last, I have regained my lost courage. My faith in the sovereign efficacy of *ahimsa* burns brighter for my confession and repentance.

I must not do an injustice to my co-workers. Many of them are filled with misgivings. My exposition of *ahimsa* is new to them. They see no cause for my repentance. They think that I am giving up a great chance created by the Award. They think, too, that as a political leader I have no right to play fast and loose with the fortunes of 75,000 souls, maybe of the whole of the people of Kathiawad. I have told them that their fears are unjustified, and that every act of purification, every accession of courage, adds to the strength of the cause of a people affected by a movement of *satyagraha*. I have told them, too, that if they regard me as the general and expert of *satyagraha*, they must put up with what may appear to them to be my vagaries.

Having now freed the Thakore Saheb and his adviser from the oppression of the Award, I have no hesitation in appealing to them to appease the people of Rajkot by fulfilling their expectations and dispelling their misgivings.

## NEW LIGHT

"Unrestricted individualism is the law of the beast of the jungle. We have learnt to strike the mean between individual freedom and social restraint. Willing submission to social restraint, for the sake of the well-being of the whole society, enriches both the individual and the society of which he is a member."

*On his return to Rajkot from Brindaban on the 12th inst., Gandhiji lost no time in resuming the threads of the situation in Rajkot where he had left them on his departure for Calcutta. He had learnt that his I Am Defeated statement, which he had issued on 23rd April last, had been resented by some Parishad workers who had felt perturbed at the idea of negotiating a settlement by themselves with Durbar Viravala, whom they had regarded as the source of all evil in Rajkot. A few of them had even issued a statement in which they had declared their disbelief in the philosophy of "converting one's enemy." Some others were of opinion that the implementing of the terms of the December 26th Notification should be insisted upon. Gandhiji elucidated his own position before a meeting of the Parishad workers within two hours of his arrival in Rajkot on the 12th inst. The time was devoted to the elucidation of doubts. For the sake of brevity, I am avoiding the questions. The following is the substance of his talk—PYARELAL*

I wonder why my statement of 23rd April should have perturbed some of you. I said nothing new in it. It was a summary of what I had told you in detail just before I left Rajkot.

So far as Vajubhai and his colleagues' statement is concerned, let me tell you I have rather liked it, inasmuch as it has served to bring out in clear relief the fundamental differences between his group and me. The Council of Action, it is stated, was constituted by the Parishad for the specific purpose of conducting the civil



disobedience fight. Now that it has been called off *sine die*, its function has lapsed. I can quite understand the objection to negotiating a settlement in its name. But I am not conducting the negotiations in the Council's name.

Let me explain my own position in this matter. When the Award was first announced, under the exultation of the moment, I allowed myself to say that the result of my Rajkot fast had exceeded my expectations. But I now find that the Chief Justice's Award has become a halter round my neck.

I did not come here at your invitation. I came here because Rajkot is the home of my childhood, and because I felt I would be able to keep its Ruler to his promises. In the various steps, which I have taken since my arrival here, I had been guided solely by my inner light and the logic of circumstances. Nobody is under any obligation to join me in my present experiment. Anybody who feels differently from me is perfectly free to go his way; and if the people of Rajkot decide to carry on the fight by following different methods, I would not mind it. I am humble enough to know that there may be a different way and a better way than mine of doing a thing. In no case do I want to see our people turn into cowards.

I welcome, too, the suggestion about calling the Parishad and obtaining its mandate with regard to the future lines of action. But I would like you not to shut your eyes to the realities of the situation. I am trying the delicate and difficult technique of negotiating a settlement with Durbar Viravala by appealing to the better self in him, while at the same time I am pursuing the stages contemplated in the Award. The Rajkot issue is not so simple or superficial as it might appear at first sight. Behind it are ranged other and powerful forces.

Eighteen days have elapsed since I discussed with you the new line of approach to the Rajkot question. The passage of time has confirmed my opinion. I confess I was guilty of impatience when I wrote to Mr. Gibson about the interminable delays, and to the Bhayats

about their suggestion to refer to the Chief Justice the meaning of my assurance to them. Such impatience reflects little credit on my *ahimsa*. My legal position was correct. But *ahimsa* does not go by legal rights.

I have now realized that I must be content to plod on with infinite patience. It is no mango trick that can be performed in the twinkling of an eye. It calls for a more potent force even than civil disobedience, *viz.*, the application of the active principle that lies at the core of *ahimsa*. This is the new light that I sense I have seen. I see it but dimly. And I am, therefore, unable to define it.

I should very much like, if I could, altogether to give up the shelter of the Award before proceeding with the work of appeasing Durbar Shri Viravala. But that requires courage, fearlessness and ample faith. If I had these, I should not hesitate to plunge into a blazing fire. But such faith cannot come by mechanical means. One must wait and pray for it. I had no idea of what jail life was like when I launched on *satyagraha* in South Africa. But once inside the prison, it became to me like a palace, a sanctuary, a place of pilgrimage, where I learnt things which probably I would not have outside.

If I had to act only for myself, I would not probably have hesitated to take the plunge. But as a custodian of the people's interests, I wonder if I should run any risks. Thus has conscience turned me into a coward, and I am vacillating between doubt and faith.

My *ahimsa* tells me that I must tear up the Award. But the reason is not yet fully convinced. 'What is the meaning of not seeking aid from the Paramount Power,' I argue to myself, 'when you are trying to secure the co-operation of Durbar Shri Viravala and the Thakore Saheb? Are they not all parts of one and the same system?' Thus, I am caught in the net of my own reasoning. All this I know is a sign of lack of faith on my part.

I cannot, while there is this conflict between the head and the heart within me, offer to take you along with me or be of much use to you as a 'guide.' I have no set theory to go by. I have not worked out the science of

*satyagraha* in its entirety. I am still groping. You can join me in my quest if it appeals to you and you feel the call.

A representative is bound to consult his principals and take his instructions from them at every step. But a physician cannot afford to do so regarding his patients. He must be guided solely by his instinct, and vary his treatment according to his reading of the symptoms as they might develop from moment to moment. He cannot accept dictation of the patient. I stand in a dual capacity in relation to you. I am your spokesman, whom you have also accepted as your physician. You must implicitly follow the treatment laid down by your physician, so long as you have faith in him. If he no longer commands your confidence, you must appoint in his place another who does.

Only a prospective mother knows what it is to carry. The on-lookers notice her illness and pity her. But she alone knows the travail. It is I who have conceived *satyagraha*. Mine alone, therefore, must be the travail and the suffering. I am not joking. I am in dreadful earnest. I shall enter the fiery gates and pursue my mission even if I am the only person left to do so. I am resolved to try and exhaust every resource of *satyagraha* to convert Durbar Viravala. If I succeed, you will all share the fruit. If I fail, the responsibility will be entirely mine and what I do will in no way affect you.

When I was a little child, there used to be two blind master performers in Rajkot. One of them was a musician. When he played on his instrument, his fingers swept the strings with an unerring instinct and everybody listened spell-bound to his playing. Similarly, there are chords in every human heart. If we only know how to strike the right chord, we bring out the music. Durbar Viravala is no exception to the rule. Have I set Durbar Viravala completely at his ease? Have I applied truth and *ahimsa* only in my dealings with him? Have I not threatened him with the Award?

We want to set up democracy in Rajkot. A born democrat is a born disciplinarian. Democracy comes

naturally to him who is habituated normally to yield willing obedience to all laws, human or divine. I claim to be a democrat both by instinct and training. Let those who are ambitious to serve democracy qualify themselves by satisfying first this acid test of democracy. Moreover, a democrat must be utterly selfless. He must think and dream not in terms of self or party, but only of democracy. Only then does he acquire the right of civil disobedience. I do not want anybody to give up his convictions or to suppress himself. I do not believe that a healthy and honest difference of opinion will injure our cause. But opportunism, camouflage or patched up compromises certainly will. If you must dissent, you should take care that your opinions voice your innermost convictions, and are not intended merely as a convenient party cry.

To-day, our democracy is choked by our internecine strife. We are torn by dissensions—dissensions between Hindus and Mussalmans, Brahmans and non-Brahmans, Congressmen and non-Congressmen. It is no easy task to evolve democracy out of this mobocracy. Let us not make confusion worse confounded by further introducing into it the virus of sectionalism and party spirit.

I value individual freedom, but you must not forget that man is essentially a social being. He has risen to this present status by learning to adjust his individualism to the requirements of social progress. Unrestricted individualism is the law of the beast of the jungle. We have learnt to strike the mean between individual freedom and social restraint. Willing submission to social restraint, for the sake of the well-being of the whole society, enriches both the individual and the society of which he is a member.

## A MOMENTOUS DECISION

### THE INCUBUS

“A *satyagrahi* seeks no adventitious aid—not of world forces, not of the Paramount Power. He deals directly with his opponent and wins him by love and utter self-surrender to God.”

Few could have expected the momentous decision announced by Gandhiji in his statement to the Press made on the 17th May, 1939. Not even his closest associates in Brindaban knew that it was coming so soon. That it might come became evident on the day he delivered his heart-stirring address on what he called his “new technique” at Brindaban on the 3rd of May.

And yet, had not the process started almost immediately after the Award, or rather immediately after the termination of the fast? If *ahimsa* is a sterling article, its golden ring must produce a golden echo in the opponent. The fast, conceived as the highest and purest form of prayer and self-surrender to God, must not produce any feeling of anger or exasperation in the opponent. But, within a couple of days or so of the termination of the fast, as Pyarelal’s diary shows, he had begun to discover that the fast had produced an effect the reverse of what was contemplated. Thus, on the 10th of March, Durbar Shri Viravala’s talk had left him with this feeling: “What is wrong with my *ahimsa*? Why has not my fast worked any change in Viravala?” The pitiless self-analysis had thus begun right from the 10th of March. Apparently, the wrong seemed all on the other side, and an ordinary man would have fretted and fumed at the seeming hard-heartedness of human nature. But not he.

But I am anticipating. Even he fretted and fumed whilst he also questioned himself. During his first meetings with the Viceroy, he made it clear that, though

he had no doubt that Sir Maurice Gwyer would give an award in his favour, there would be no peace in Rajkot until he contented himself with a bare majority—instead of a large majority that a favourable award would ensure. But, as I have said, he also fretted and fumed, possibly because we ordinary mortals surrounded him and he is human enough to allow himself to be affected by his associates' feeling. News that came daily from Rajkot fanned the flame of irritation. The authorities there were behaving as though no settlement had taken place. "Had I fasted for this? Did I not break my fast too soon?" That is how he thought.

On the 26th March, he got to see a copy of Durbar Shri Viravala's statement of the Thakore Saheb's case submitted to the Chief Justice. The plea of fraud, coercion and bad faith irritated him, as it irritated the Sardar. Again, came the question: "Why has my fast been so infructuous? Why cannot Viravala see that I could not have fasted on the strength of a fraudulently obtained document?"

Then came the Award, completely vindicating the Sardar. But Gandhiji was far from easy. Would it be possible to implement the Award in the existing atmosphere in Rajkot? Would it not be a noose round our neck rather than a Gordian Knot untied? He saw the Viceroy, offered to sacrifice the majority and have a bare majority with the Thakore Saheb's nominees, or to do without a full Committee under Notification. But the Viceroy was helpless. He asked him to come to whatever arrangements he liked with the Thakore Saheb in Rajkot, but no arrangement could be made over the Thakore Saheb's head.

On coming to Rajkot, the question came to him with redoubled force. The Award—the result of the fast—was such a terrible bugbear to Durbar Shri Viravala that he had exhausted all his skill in placing countless hurdles in the way. There was the rejection of the names of the Committee suggested by Sardar Vallabhbhai, though some of these names had been approved by the State itself at an earlier stage. Then came the Bhayats and the

Mussalmans on the scene. An endless process of bitterness. That led to the 'sporting offer' made to the Resident of asking the Thakore Saheb to form his own Committee. That was rejected by Durbar Viravala—and rightly, as Gandhiji's statement of the 17th May vividly explains.

At this stage, the question of something radically lacking in his *ahimsa* takes a more concrete form. He had no doubt that apparently right was on his side, that the evil designs of all would be ultimately frustrated. But would *ahimsa* win in the end? Would *ahimsa* multiply itself as it must, or would it produce a counter-action? That brought the question to the forefront: 'The Award which was right and vindicative of justice has been such a Pandora's Box that there must be something intrinsically wrong in the process of winning it.' The *end* seemed to be so pure and yet it was so full of mischief that there could not but have been something impure about the *means*.

That brings us to the statement from Rajkot made on the 24th April. *Ahimsa* rushes into the mouth of *himsa* instead of irritating it. *Ahimsa* posits the good in the opponent and operates on it. Durbar Shri Viravala cannot but respond if we approach him in unadulterated *ahimsa*.

It was in the contemplative retreat at Brindaban that the matter came straight home to him that not only was his *ahimsa* imperfect, but that it was doubly imperfect in that it had sought adventitious aid. Utter self-surrender to God, by which alone can the fast of a *satyagrahi* be judged, had been lacking. The fruit of the fast, therefore, must be renounced. But there were so many involved in it and, therefore, the courage was lacking. But the discovery had been made that the Award was an incubus, not only for himself but for Durbar Viravala. It oppressed Gandhiji morally; it distressed the Durbar as a weapon unworthy of a *satyagrahi*.

Elsewhere will be found a resume of his loud thinking before his co-workers on arrival in Rajkot on the 12th

May.<sup>1</sup> In a personal letter to Durbar Shri Viravala, written on the same day, he mentioned "the double game" he was playing, and almost indicates that he loathed it.

### THE LOUD THINKING

Every day he lost no opportunity of thinking aloud before co-workers. Slowly, but surely, the decision was coming.

"The statement I made on leaving Rajkot correctly represented my state of mind. The views I expressed are, if anything, stronger to-day. I own that I was impatient. The Award which was a tainted fruit made me impatient. That impatience was a slur on my *ahimsa*. It was that impatience that made me say to the Bhayats and Mussalmans that I was not prepared to wait for Sir Maurice Gwyer's Award on their reference, the work of the Committee must go on. There was no Committee then, but impatience made me speak so."

Again:

"There is no doubt in my mind that the Award must be renounced. How can I woo Durbar Viravala and also keep the sword of the Award hanging over his head? But where is the courage? The faint-heartedness is unworthy of a *satyagrahi* who must have nothing but faith in God to sustain him."

In three days he had advanced a few more steps :

"What is it that prevents me from throwing the Award overboard? It is not only faint-heartedness but it smacks of diplomacy. If I want Durbar Viravala to act on the square, I must relieve his fears, too. Why should he have to remain in fear of the Paramount Power and not do what he can of his own free will? I am talking so much of *ahimsa*, but I am not walking fearlessly into the mouth of *himsa*. A *satyagrahi* seeks no adventitious aid—not of world forces, not of the Paramount Power. He deals directly with his opponent and wins him by love and utter self-surrender to God. The very difficulty of implementing the Award, the very fact that it has proved a Pandora's Box shows that God wants me to throw it away, however seemingly fruitful of future good it may be. God seems to be speaking to me in strident tones: 'Your victory was no victory. Throw it away.' You want me to go on with the work of the Award, because it belongs to you. But how can I go on with it when my courage fails me, my hands are shaking and I am faltering? It is a moral issue with me. The consciousness

<sup>1</sup> See *New Light*—p. 201.



of the wrong of the initial step I took oppresses me, and I cannot go on with it, however much you may want me to go on with it. What will you do with such a halting, faltering general? I must throw the Award overboard, and you in your turn may throw the general overboard."

As I was talking with Mr. Gibson in the afternoon of the 17th and telling him that Gandhiji was seriously thinking of discarding the Award and asking his co-workers' opinion about the step, here in the Anand Bhavan the decision had been already arrived at!

The Bhayats' and Mussalmans' statements of their case had come then. He began dictating the reply which was plain and simple. But then he said :

"Why this burden on the poor Chief Justice when I do not want to benefit by his Award which has given rise to this reference? Even if he decides this reference in my favour—as I am sure he must—I have no use for it."

And with this, he retired into silence and sat down to write the statement which is now public property.

#### A FEW QUESTIONS

After the statement was ready to be given to the Press and before it was typed, we had a little discussion to clear our own minds. The Sardar was there. He had nothing whatsoever to say regarding Gandhiji's moral position. But I was not quite free from doubt. I said :

"How was it wrong to ask the Paramount Power to intervene? You did not insist on the letter of your vow. Otherwise, you might have said you could not break the fast until your demand was satisfied. But you were content with the arbitration of the Chief Justice. Even so, in 1917 when you fasted during the Ahmedabad labour strike, you did not insist on the 35 per cent increase in wage, but you contented yourself with the mill-owners consenting to an arbitration. In fact, if the Thakore Saheb had yielded to your demand without the intervention of the Paramount Power, he might have charged you with having coerced him. But here the arbitration which was the result of the Fast ought to have been given you even without the Fast."

"You are right," said Gandhiji. "But why don't you see that in 1917 the arbitration was offered by mill-owners? If the Thakore Saheb had offered arbitration of his own accord, it

would have been splendid. But here I appealed to the Paramount Power. That is why the arbitration has been infructuous. I had no business to be impatient. Instead of waiting on God and allowing my fast to work itself, I sought outside aid. It was a grave blunder."

"But," I said, "why not wait until Sir Maurice Gwyer gives his decision on the new reference? Let not the Mussalmans and Bhayats have the pretext of saying you fought shy of the Chief Justice's decision."

"Why must I wait to take the right decision? It cannot wait a moment's delay. I know that the reference is mischievous and we must win. That might give greater value to the renunciation. But I am not renouncing the Award in order that the world may acclaim the act. By no means. I am freeing myself from a terrible oppression. I have made my decision and am feeling free as a bird."

### A SACRED DISCOURSE

The next day, I just listened as Kasturba Gandhi was questioning Gandhiji in her tenderly child-like way. Gandhiji's aged sister, ignorant and unlettered but a devout soul, was terribly perturbed over the decision and was disconsolate as she had heard some one say that Gandhiji had been defeated. The news had come to Kasturba with a shock; she also perhaps shared the sister's feelings. She pleaded with Gandhiji to console the aged sister.

"But," said Gandhiji with a smile, "why would not you plead my case?"

"But how can I? I do not myself understand."

"But you must understand. You remember the time in South Africa when you were dying and the doctor said you would not live unless you took chicken broth?"

"Oh yes, I remember."

"Well, if you do, don't you also remember that, though I allowed you to do as you liked, you said you would prefer to die but you could not take chicken broth?"

"Yes."

"That was because you were firm in your faith in God. You knew that God would keep you if He so willed, but that you would not care to live by breaking your vow not to touch meat."

"Yes."

"Even so, I should have fasted until the Thakore Sahab and Durbar Viravala had come to me relenting and saying: 'Please break your fast. We are going to fulfil our promise.' Instead, I wavered. I thought I must seek the aid of the British Government,

lest I should die. It was a sin. And if I got the Award by committing the sin, I must give up the fruit of sin."

"But the Thakore Sahab and Viravala are placing obstructions in the way. If they were not doing so, the Award would work all right and there would be an end to all the trouble. They are so obstreperous."

"They are so, because of my initial blunder. I irritated them and I have no right to expect better treatment from them. It is not they who are putting the obstacles. It is God acting through them who is putting the obstacles. It is God who has thus opened my eyes and shown me the way. And the sooner I wash my hands of the sin the better. Don't you think so?"

"Yes," she said hesitatingly. "But what of the repressive ordinances, the fines, etc.? We have given up everything and they are still going on as usual!"

"What does that matter? We have to do our duty, trusting them to do theirs. Why do not you see that because I failed in my duty and was impatient to reap the result of my fast or to break it soon, that God has punished me thus? But I am not defeated. Tell sister, there is no defeat in the confession of one's error. The confession itself is a victory."

—*Mahadev Desai*

## THE DECISION AND AFTER—I

### MORE ABOUT THE AWARD

“A non-violent fight is sharp as the edge of the sword, sharpened on the whetstone of the heart. A straight fight in an equal battle takes some bravery; but braver is he who, knowing that he is fighting an unequal battle, knowing that he would have to sacrifice 95 as against 5 of the enemy, faces death.”

I attempted in my last article to give some measure of the oppression that the Award was exercising on Gandhiji's mind. What could be more revealing than that tender discourse with Kasturba wherein he regarded the breaking of the fast with the Viceroy's intervention as a heinous sin? On another occasion, he said he had condemned his own weakness more mildly than he should have done.

“For, I proved myself of little faith. If I had staked my all on my faith in God and on the efficacy of my fast in melting the Thakore Saheb's and Durbar Shri Viravala's heart, the worst that could have happened would have been my death. But it would have been a worthy death. And if the Thakore Saheb and Viravala had not let me die, they would have come to me as friends and given me what I wanted. In any event, the result would have been better than the breach of my faith in God and making Durbar Viravala my enemy by appealing to the Viceroy to intervene and even to turn him out. I am amazed at my own folly in thus antagonizing him and still expecting to convert him. His own generosity is, I think, out of proportion to the provocation I had given him.”

That shows the depth of his remorse, and it is necessary to understand it and bear it in mind to understand the steps that followed.

It is conscience that doth make cowards of us all, and the feeling of helplessness that came over Gandhiji, as soon as he was stricken with the remorse, is evident

in the words : "My hands are shaking and my steps faltering."

Another aspect of this is to be observed in the words he used on another occasion :

"The very possession of this Award has made me a coward and, I am afraid, if I were to retain it, it would make cowards of you, too. A *satyagrahi* does not depend for his strength on external means. His strength comes from within, from his reliance on God. God becomes his shield when he throws down all his earthly weapons. But if he were to hide a fire-arm in his pocket, his inner strength would go and he would cease to feel invulnerable. The Award was very like a fire-arm in the pocket of a votary of *ahimsa* like me. It stood between me and my God. It shamed me and made a coward of me. I have thrown it away as Christian did his load of sin, and I am feeling again free and invulnerable and one with my Maker."

#### THAT DURBAR

The first step of atonement for the sin of having tarnished a pure act of prayer that the fast was, was to shun the fruit of the sin—the Award. The next step was going to the *Durbar*. Those who were angry with Gandhiji for having attended the *Durbar* little realized that it was part of the process of penance that he was going through. What else could have been his motive ?

"Have I ever in my life been guilty of flattery ? Have I ever resorted to flattery even in public interest ? I declared years ago that I would not sell truth and non-violence even for the freedom of my country, and I have repeated it many times since. Would he who said it resort to flattery ? When Durbar Shri Viravala invited me to go to the palace, he even said that I had justified my claim to be as the father of the Thakore Saheb, that the latter would gladly come and see me, but that he would be happy if I went there. He said I need not attend the *Durbar* which was to be held, but that he would ask the people to wait a while to see me when I went there. I saw what he meant, but I was determined to attend even the *Durbar*, if he had so desired. I would have attended it even if he had told me that it was in celebration of the Thakore Saheb's victory and my defeat. I had offended him by having secured the Award over his head, and I owed it to him to wipe out the offence by attending the function. It was a debt I owed, and I was in honour bound to repay it with interest. He might have asked for even an act of humiliation from me, and I might have done anything short of sacrificing

my sense of self-respect or honour. But he asked me to do nothing of the kind. The invitation was natural and polite. The *Darbar* was held to announce the repeal of repressive legislations, etc., and the formation of the Reforms Committee. He who atones for sins never calculates; he pours out the whole essence of his contrite heart. I may tell you that my atonement is not yet over. I know that I am speaking in a language that is beyond you, but if you have had even a slight glimpse of true *ahimsa*, you should feel that all that I am doing now is the most natural thing for me.

“A non-violent fight is sharp as the edge of the sword, sharpened on the whetstone of the heart. A straight fight in an equal battle takes some bravery; but braver is he who, knowing that he is fighting an unequal battle, knowing that he would have to sacrifice 95 as against 5 of the enemy, faces death. That is why we still extol the prowess of Pratap and Shivaji. But a *satyagrahi* risks all and offers of himself a willing and pure sacrifice. Without the will and the purity, the sacrifice is nothing worth. I assure you that what I have done is what every true *satyagrahi* ought to do. ‘Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.’”

### “AS YOU WERE” ?

But if Gandhiji feels free as a bird, having shed the burden of the Award, not so the workers. They felt they were throwing away some hard-earned wealth and being asked to sit empty-handed in despair. He has been talking to them for days. The despair has not yet left them. And yet when one comes to think of it, are they or the people of Rajkot any the worse than were the people of Bardoli or of the whole of India after the Bardoli Decision of 1922 ? Apparently, the latter were in a much worse position. They felt that they were being made to suffer for the misdeeds of far-off Chauri Chaura. They also felt that the cup which was almost near their lips was dashed to pieces. They thought it was a most suicidal step to ask the people who were overflowing with enthusiasm and ready for all sacrifices to sit quietly in their homes and turn their wheels. There was the semblance of a reason for their despair and even anger. Is there here even that semblance of a reason ? What is dashed to pieces ? Not the cup of nectar that the people had won with their sufferings, but the cup of poison that

Gandhiji had won with his own what he calls tainted suffering. What they had won is still there. No one has wrested it off their hands. That Notification of the 26th December 1938 is still there for them to work for and to have carried out. If anything, they are in a better position to have it carried out than they were.

But I shall let Gandhiji explain. This is what he said to them in one of his afternoon talks :

"You ought to understand and appreciate the rejection of the Award. It was well-nigh impossible for you to have (to use the legal language) that decree executed. I could have got it done, but at the cost of enormous labour and time and legal talent that I still possess. Meanwhile, your energies would have been rusting, and your hands would have been crippled. You would have learnt nothing from the skill with which I should have been tackling the fresh hurdles that were being daily placed in my way. I have saved you from the burden of my sin. You are, at worst, 'as you were.' If you want foolishly to march to jail, you are now free. Only, you must not look to me. I can carry you forward along my own lines. It may be that I am unfit to lead you. You can then discard me, and you have every right to do so. You may not tolerate a general who changes his tactics every now and then. But if you will have me, you must have me on my terms."

These remarks were addressed to the workers. But he talks to the children, too, in a similar strain. As much light was shed on the situation by his talk with a child the other day, as was done by his talk with Kasturba. The child had no doubt about the rejection of the Award. But he was wondering what we had gained by the rejection. To him Gandhiji said :

"The Award was a cobra. And when we have a cobra in the house how do we feel?"

"We are afraid."

"Well then, so long as the Award was there both Durbar Shri Viravala and I were afraid of it, and were trying to dodge it. But it would not be dodged. I have gently put it out of the house and we are both now free from fear."

"I see that it was necessary to discard the Award, but what have we gained?"

"Is it a small gain to have been rid of a venomous cobra and thus rid of fear? It was a cobra in the house. We can now live in the house like a happy family. Durbar Shri Viravala and I not only sought to dodge the cobra, but we used to shun each

other. We at least meet each other now as friends!"

"But what is it worth? What is there in Durbar Shri Viravala to draw out?"

"What is there in you?" The child was struck dumb. "Well, if there are any virtues in you, even so there are in Durbar Shri Viravala. And if I hug you as my own child, why should I not hug Durbar Shri Viravala as a member of the family? I know you; I do not know Durbar Shri Viravala. But we have to be friends with him and to make the best of the virtues that he surely has. As you have *atman* in you, even so has he. Indeed, there is no human being but has something valuable in him, some quality of the *atman*, if we can but observingly distil it out."

"But what are we to do after the cobra is gone? With the cobra seems to have gone even the house—all that we had won."

"No, nothing else is gone. The Notification is still there. And we are the wiser for the experience of the past three months. I had taken a wrong route, I have retraced my step. We thought that we could achieve much by hard swearing. We know that it had a contrary result. We have examined the quality of our *ahimsa*. It was poor. We had made enemies of our opponents. We have to win them by love, and the way is now clear for us. Our fight for freedom is not over. It cannot be over. But we are now free to carry it on in a better atmosphere and with cleaner weapons."

### TRUST THE UNTRUSTWORTHY

But the fact is that the battle, like other battles in our fight for freedom, has been fought with a view to unilateral victory, and not a bilateral victory, if I may say so. We have thought little of the opponent, and never made a conscious attempt to convert him. This was pointed out in a strikingly new way by Gandhiji in his speech at the public meeting in Rajkot:

"I want the Parishad people to realize the implication of *ahimsa*. *Ahimsa* trusts the opponent, *ahimsa* does not attribute motives, it harbours no evil thoughts as I did in the case of Durbar Shri Viravala. Whether he really answered to the description that was being given of him or not, was beside the point. I shamed my *ahimsa* by suspecting him; whereas, if I wanted to convert him, my love for him should have increased every day. If I had to use harsh words for him, they should have been such as I might have used only for my father, mother, wife or son. And you behaved no better. The Parishad workers put no curb on their tongue and indulged in unrestrained language. You have now to begin a new chapter. You must bid good-bye to this inclination



to indulge in unrestrained language. You have to understand *ahimsa* as you have not understood it before. *Ahimsa* means that you have to trust those whom you have come to regard as untrustworthy. Unless you do so, you can never convert them. Mahadev Desai and Mohanbhai, who have been having daily talks with Durbar Shri Viravala, tell me that his attitude has undergone a complete change. Don't tell me that this change may be only momentary. The momentary change may well become permanent some day. *Ahimsa* has no limits, and patience too has none. We lose nothing thereby. What I did lose was when I allowed my *ahimsa* or soul to be besmirched. I began the process of self-purification by discarding the Award. That process is still going on, and it was for me but a step in the process to attend the *Durbar*."

A Christian friend was saying to me the other day that he was rather puzzled that Gandhiji called his present move in Rajkot a new technique. Had it not been his technique all his life? He was right. There is, indeed, nothing new in it. Only, it means a new awareness of the old. What Christian does not know the golden words: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.....For, if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if you salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?" But many would say, and do say: "What is this new thing that Gandhiji is now demanding of us?" If we trust those whom we know or have regarded as trustworthy, what reward have we? Do not the publicans the same? The virtue lies in trusting those whom you do not know or have regarded as untrustworthy. That is what he proclaimed at the meeting—the age-old truth in a new language. I hope our friends in Travancore, especially the Christians who are fighting a hard battle, will appreciate this all the more.

#### THE IMPLICATION OF THE STEP

There have been all kinds of criticisms of what has been called, and what Gandhiji has accepted, as his recantation. *The Times of India* suggested the other day that

the recantation was a confession of the error of the fast. It has again repeated the suggestion :

“Mr. Gandhi has expressed his profound regret for employing the sinful method of coercion; he now says that his efforts ought to have been directed towards melting the hearts of his opponents and educating them to his way of thinking.”

This is a gross misunderstanding of Gandhiji's statement. The latter part of the sentence is true, but that was precisely why he went on fast, and he rejected the Award not because the fast was a “sinful method of coercion”, but because he had sought adventitious aid and thus frustrated the inherent power of the fast which otherwise would have melted the heart of the opponent. Fasting, as the highest expression of the prayer of a pure and loving heart, has been for ages and will for ever remain an effective method of conversion. To suggest that Gandhiji has rejected this method and expressed his regret for it, is to misread his statement and to mislead the public.

Nor is the other deduction from his statement correct, *viz.*, that he has ruled out the intervention of the Paramount Power in affairs in Indian States. The statement applies strictly and exclusively with reference to his step of fasting. Having taken a sacred step, having kept God between him and his opponent, having trusted God to melt the heart of the opponent, he had, in a moment of weakness and in impatience unbecoming a *satyagrahi*, sought the aid of the Paramount Power. The seeking of this aid is by itself not wrong, in fact, it is right and necessary in its place, and Gandhiji certainly has not given it up, as would be apparent from his article on Talcher recently.<sup>1</sup> The Paramount Power owes a duty to the States and the States' people of which it may not divest itself, and it is our right and duty to awaken it to its sense of duty whenever there is dereliction—as there is in many cases to-day.

—Mahadev Desai

<sup>1</sup> See *Talcher Again*—p. 393.

## THE DECISION AND AFTER—II

### NO ISSUE

“Non-violent action does mean much silent work and little speech or writing. These will always be necessary because thought-control is not an easy thing. Nevertheless, we have to cultivate that habit if we will have non-violence reigning supreme in this land, and if we are to have responsible government through unadulterated non-violence.”

One of the criticisms of the decision to renounce the Gwyer Award came from the Bhayats and the Muslims. Gandhiji, they have suggested, had not the courage to face the Chief Justice's decision and hence backed out of his promise. I am putting it bluntly, but they have said it in even worse language, and even after the decision, pressed for the reference being made. Is there any substance in their criticism? No more than there was in their contention that Gandhiji had given them the promise they had attributed to him. If he did give them the promise, why did he undertake the fast, and why did the Mussalmans and Bhayats let him go on the fast? It presupposes, on Gandhiji's part, folly his worst enemies have not credited him with, and on the Mussalmans' and Bhayats' part readiness to gloat over suffering which no one would like to associate with them.

But if their contention was so palpably absurd, why not let the Chief Justice say so? Gandhiji is not built that way. For the academic pleasure of having his own moral position established, he would not put that unnecessary strain on the Chief Justice. But if the Mussalmans' and the Bhayats' contention was right? The bone of contention having been removed, there remains nothing to contend for. Remains the moral issue. It is one between Gandhiji and his Maker, and not for any earthly authority to determine. It will be remembered that the

Chief Justice declined to say anything in his Award regarding the question of breach of faith on the part of the Thakore Saheb. Assuming the impossible—*viz.*, that the Chief Justice had decided, on a reference being made, that Gandhiji's promise was unconditional, would that prove that Gandhiji was guilty of a breach of promise? Oftentimes, in law courts, the guilty are acquitted and the innocent are punished. Are the innocent, therefore, to believe that they are guilty?

#### DISCIPLINE—SATYAGRAHI AND MILITARY

Gandhiji's decision, as I have said before, came upon most of the workers as a surprise. The decision to go on the fast must have been no less a surprise. How can workers stand frequent shocks of this kind is the question, rather was the question posed by some of the workers. Whilst Gandhiji repeatedly gave them the liberty to decide for themselves and to break away from him as they liked, he made no secret of his own mind on this important question. He said :

"I have not yet known a general who has not altered time and again the plans of his campaign and made eleventh hour alterations in his orders. The ordinary fighting soldier knows nothing of these plans. In fact, they are a closely guarded secret unknown to all but the general himself. That is why Tennyson wrote those immortal lines—

'Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs not to make reply,  
Theirs but to do and die.'

But these words apply, if you please, to a *satyagrahi* army more appropriately than to the ordinary army. For, a military general may change his plans in view of the changing situations every day. Military strategy depends on the changing tactics of the enemy. The *satyagrahi* general has to obey his inner voice, for, over and above the situation outside, he examines himself constantly and listens to the dictates of the inner self. But both in *satyagraha* and military warfare, the position of the soldier is very nearly the same. He knows no rest, no certainty of movements, the only certainty for him is to face heavy odds and even death. His promise to be under discipline and to obey the general's commands applies even during the period of suspension of hostilities. But I have not asked for this kind of

discipline. I have always tried to carry conviction to my co-workers, to carry their hearts and their reasons with me. I shall go on doing so always, but where you cannot follow, you will have to have faith. In ordinary warfare, a soldier cannot reason why. In our warfare, there is enough scope for reasoning, but there is a limit to it. You will go on arguing until you are convinced, but when no conviction comes you must fall back on faith."

With these words he explained why there was no alternative for him but to reject the Award. This argument has been summarized more than once in these pages. As I have shown, it was essentially a moral issue, but Gandhiji had no difficulty in showing that it could not but have the best results.

"There is now the way of negotiation open to you, but if you cannot think of it, it is open to you to fight. In fact, if I had not cast away the Award, the fight would have been long delayed. I have saved you a few months. But you can overthrow my leadership and be free. From the point of view of *satyagraha*, there is nothing but good coming out of the decision. A general is none the worse for realization of his weakness and for atoning for his sin. In fact, sin, ignorance, weakness are synonymous, and in asking for the Viceroy's intervention and clinging to the Award I was guilty of all the three. When a general purifies himself, as I have done, far from weakening his army he adds to its strength enormously."

### MORE ABOUT THE NEW LIGHT

The essence of the new technique lies in faith in the convertibility of the opponent by means of purest non-violence. Gandhiji explained it once again in the course of a talk to the workers.

"There should not be the least little suspicion in your mind that Durbar Viravala cannot be converted, no matter how non-violent you may be. Do you mean to say that he is the concentrated essence of evil in Kathiawad? Let me assure you that we in his position might have done no better. Every one of us is a mixture of good and evil. Is there not plenty of evil in us? There is enough of it in me and I always pray to God to purge me of it. The difference that there is between human beings is the difference of degree, and you must always try to place yourself in the position of the man you are about to judge. Virtue lies in discovering the best in your opponent and in appealing to it."

## WHAT NEXT ?

The answer to this question is succinctly given in the statement issued from Bombay on the 5th of June, with special reference to the situation in Travancore and general reference to that in all the States. The whole statement<sup>1</sup> must be read with this important proviso :—

“My advice applies only if the evidence of your senses coincides with the description of the general conditions I have given in most of the Indian States. If you accept my reading, lower your key, pitch your immediate demands a little less high than you have hitherto done, and concentrate your energies on producing an atmosphere of non-violence of the brave.”

He explained the programme in detail to the Rajkot workers :

“This depends on individual workers cultivating non-violence in thought, word and deed, by means of a concentrated effort in the fulfilment of the four-fold constructive programme. Maximum of work and minimum of speech must be your motto. In the centre of the programme is the spinning-wheel—no haphazard programme of spinning, but scientific understanding of every detail, including the mechanics and the mathematics of it, study of cotton and its varieties, and so on. There is the programme of literacy. You must concentrate exclusively on it, and not talk of any other thing. The work should be systematic and according to time-table. Don’t talk of politics—not even of non-violence—but talk to them of the advantages of literacy. There is prohibition of drink and intoxicating drugs and of gambling. There is medical relief by means of the propagation of simple rules of hygiene and sanitation and elementary preventive measures, and of cheap home remedies and training intelligent village-folk in these.

“There should not be one house in Rajkot with which you have not established contact from the point of view of pure service. You have to cultivate the Mussalmans, serve them unselfishly. There are the Harijans. Establish living contact with them.

“All this constructive work should be for its own sake. And yet be sure that it will develop the quality required for non-violent responsible government. That is how I began my work in South Africa. I began with serving them. I did not know that I was training them for civil disobedience. I did not know myself that I was so training myself. But you all know what happened in the end.

<sup>1</sup> See *New Technique in Action*—p. 323.

"This constructive programme may go on endlessly. Why should you be tired of it? Do you know the Hundred Years' War in England? If they fought for a hundred years, we should be prepared to fight for a thousand years, inasmuch as we are a continent. That we will have given our contribution to the fight for freedom, will be our reward.

"That is the mass constructive programme I want you to do, and that is the basis of the training for the non-violence of the brave. It is whole and indivisible, and those who do not believe in it whole-heartedly, must leave me and work according to their own lights."

But, as I have said, this programme depends on Gandhiji's own reading of the situation in the States. If the situation is different, if the people in a State are to a man ready to offer the utmost they can?

"Then I would say to them—Be reduced to ashes. But that will be on one condition, *viz.*, that you have reached the state of non-violence of my description. If I can have that assurance, I would say that, though it is unequal battle, you may fight single-handed in spite of opposition from the Paramount Power and the States. I would be the last person to cool the zeal and ardour of the people."

#### THE ESSENCE OF THE MASS PROGRAMME

But would it not suffice if the workers were pledged to carry out the programme and carried it out faithfully?

"Hardly. For you have to give a visible demonstration of the fact that the whole of the State obeys your discipline. You want responsible government for all, not merely for the workers."

Gandhiji gave two instances. In 1922, he was sent to jail. He gave express instructions to the effect that there should be no *bartal*, no demonstrations, work should go on as usual. A Secretary of State had described the situation in his derisive way—"When Gandhiji went to jail, not a dog barked." But Gandhiji accepted it as a compliment and said that he was responsible for the quiet that prevailed. The people had literally carried out his instructions. Another instance. In 1921, there were the riots in Bombay. Gandhiji declared a fast until the rioters came to their senses. Mian Mahomed Haji Jan Mahomed Chhotani was then living. He had complete control on the mischievous element, and he said to Gandhiji:

"Please break the fast. I know these men, they are under my control, and I assure you they will be quiet."

"You should be able to say that," said Gandhiji, "with regard to all, whether they belong to your party or not." To acquire that control, the people should fulfil the constructive programme in all its details. Non-violence has failed in exact proportion to the failure of the *Charkha*. There are other items Prohibition, Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability. It is difficult to submit individuals to the test in these items. There is room for self-deception. Not so in the matter of the wheel. The work can be measured from day to day.

"You have to take up the programme with apostolic zeal. I cannot give you a new programme. Civil disobedience is for the few who are saturated with the spirit of non-violence and are ready for the utmost sacrifice. Constructive programme is for all. It is to be accepted by all actively and not as a lip profession. It has got to be worked or not worked. *Khadi* is worn or not worn. Let this four-fold programme be the acid test of your followers. Otherwise, of course, don't the cinema companies and cigarette sellers have a large enough following? Don't be deluded by those who gather about you and shout '*Inquilab Zindabad*' or swear at some one or other.

"Banish all idle thoughts from your hearts and concentrate only on the thoughts you must have. You will thus obtain marvellous control over yourselves and others. A good man's thought never goes in vain. Thought-control means maximum of work with minimum of energy. If we had that control, we should not have to put forth the tremendous effort we do. Non-violent action does mean much silent work and little speech or writing. These will always be necessary because thought-control is not an easy thing. Nevertheless, we have to cultivate that habit if we will have non-violence reigning supreme in this land, and if we are to have responsible government through unadulterated non-violence."

—Mahadev Desai



## THE DECISION AND AFTER—III

### MORE SELF-INTROSPECTION

“Fleeing from battle is cowardice and unworthy of a warrior. An armed fighter is known to have sought fresh arms as soon as he loses those in his possession or they lose their efficacy. He leaves the battle to get them. A non-violent warrior knows no leaving the battle. He rushes into the mouth of *himsa*, never even once harbouring an evil thought.”

I have in the last two articles attempted to give some idea of the workings of Gandhiji's mind since the decision to renounce the Award. In fact, I described the statement issued on the Travancore situation and on the situation in the States in general as the first corollary to the decision. The statement, to speak chronologically, was prepared on the train taking us to Bombay on the first of June. It might have been issued to the Press on the 2nd, but work in Bombay delayed its revision until the 4th.

On the 31st May, in Rajkot, was held a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Kathiawad Political Conference. What Gandhiji said to the members of this Committee already foreshadowed what was to appear in the statement on the States :

“It is growing upon me every day that we shall have to lower our key, our demand for full responsible government will have to remain in abeyance for some time. Not that we are not entitled to it, but it is clear to me that we have not the will for it, we are not ready to pay the price. There is an awakening, but it is not the awakening of active non-violence of the brave. Not that I have suddenly realized this. The realization was there, the will to face the conclusion was not there, and I am reaping the fruit of that weakness of the will. I have been weak-willed ever since Bardoli onwards, but my co-workers deluded themselves into the belief that we had attained the requisite non-violence and I shared their delusion.

"I do not repent of this. It is likely that, if we had acted otherwise, there would not have been the awakening we see to-day. But that seems to lead one to a rather dreadful conclusion, *viz.*, that compromise with non-violence was necessary for a widespread awakening! But that is not the conclusion. The conclusion is that God chooses as His instruments the humblest and weakest of His creatures to fulfil Himself.

"To-day, with greater realization, I would not lead another Dandi March. The breach of the Salt Laws was a perfect proposition, but violence of the mind had crept in almost from the beginning. All that we had learnt then was that it was expedient to refrain from the use of physical violence. This was the non-violence of the calculating Bania, not of the brave Kshatriya. This non-violence of the calculating Bania has not, could not have, carried us far. It could not possibly avail to win and retain *Swaraj*, to win over our opponent who believed in the use of arms.

"To-day, I sense violence everywhere; smell it inside and outside Congress ranks. In 1921, even the *goonda* element outside the Congress was more or less under our control. Perfect non-violence is difficult. It admits no weakness. It made me take the false step of approaching the Viceroy in order to end my fast. It was unpardonable on the part of a general who claims to derive his whole strength from God. But God gave me the courage to retrieve the blunder, and we are all the stronger and purer for it."

### COWARDICE WORSE THAN VIOLENCE

What led to the realization and prompt action thereupon? The fact that the so-called *ahimsa* had failed to breed *ahimsa*. It had bred the opposite of it. Surely, then, there was something wanting about that *ahimsa*.

"I am not tired of repeating again and again that we should be non-violent in thought and word and deed. We had been saying so, but there was no emphasis on the first of these. A dissolute character is more dissolute in thought than in deed. And the same is true of violence. Our violence in word and deed is but a feeble echo of the surging violence of thought in us.

"Are you prepared to go with me so far? Does all that I say carry conviction? If so, violence should be eschewed from the innermost of our thoughts. But if you cannot go with me, do go your own way. If you can reach your goal in any other way, do so by all means. You will deserve my congratulations. For, I cannot in any case stand cowardice. Let no one say, when I am gone, that I taught the people to be cowards. If you think my *ahimsa* amounts to that, or leads you to that, you should reject it without hesitation. I would far rather that you died bravely dealing a blow and receiving a blow than died in abject terror. If the

*ahimsa* of my dream is impossible, you can reject the creed rather than carry on the pretence of non-violence.

"Fleeing from battle—*palayanam*—is cowardice, and unworthy of a warrior. An armed fighter is known to have sought fresh arms as soon as he loses those in his possession or they lose their efficacy. He leaves the battle to get them. A non-violent warrior knows no leaving the battle. He rushes into the mouth of *bimsa*, never even once harbouring an evil thought. If this *ahimsa* seems to you to be impossible, let us be honest with ourselves and say so, and give it up.

"For me, there is no laying down arms. I cannot do so. I am trying to be the warrior of my description and, if God wills, I may be that during this life. Such a warrior can fight single-handed."

### FIGHTING SINGLE-HANDED

What does this fighting single-handed mean? It simply means that perfected *ahimsa* becomes infectious, and so the environment responds. If such a time ever comes, the civil disobedience of *one* would cover all. Not that the others would be doing nothing, they will be doing the task allotted to them. This I take it is the meaning of Patanjali's aphorism: "As soon as *ahimsa* is perfected, all enmity around ceases." The sage did not utter the words in vain. It must have been the quintessence of his own experience, on no matter how narrow or different a field. If God fires one with the ambition to fulfil it, He must give him the power for it. Gandhiji invites every one to have the ambition and to fulfil it. Who knows? There may be some one better fitted than he. But even if every one turns aside incredulously, he cannot turn back. This is how he explained it:

"Let me give a bit of my own experience in South Africa. When thousands joined the movement, I had not spoken to them, not even seen them. Papers they could not read. My heart was working in unison with them. Living faith is all that is necessary. It is evident that I have not the capacity to-day to inspire faith in the millions. This needs superior living faith in non-violence and in God. This faith is self-acting, and illumines man's life more and more every day. In the pursuit of my earnest research, I may seem to act strangely. I should not grumble if every one left me in the honesty of his conviction. Let no one stick to me in the blind faith that something will happen. Such will hinder rather than help the cause."

Speaking on another occasion to a Muslim friend he said :

"I have been talking of non-violence these 20 years, but I have made unlawful compromises with myself. My mind goes back to the days of *Khilafat* agitation. I had the friendship of thousands of Muslims, then. When, at a meeting of the Muslim League before 1920, I asked for the supreme sacrifice, two or three names were given by Khwaja Saheb Abdul Majid, but I believed that many would come forward at the right time. And they did. But looking back upon those times, I see that I compromised non-violence. I was satisfied with mere abstention from physical violence."

With this Gandhiji gave instances which I omit here. Continuing he said:

"The fact is I have never placed unadulterated *ahimsa* before the country. If I had done so, there would have been complete Hindu-Muslim unity. No doubt, I kept on saying there would be no *Swaraj* without Hindu-Muslim unity, but I should have seen that there was no Hindu-Muslim unity because there was not that insistence on unadulterated *ahimsa* on the part of all, whether Hindu or Muslim. No wonder, my new technique puzzles many. But I must go on. If I am right, the puzzles will be solved."

#### THAT LIVING FAITH IN GOD

That brings me once again to Gandhiji's insistence on a *satyagrahi* having a living faith in God. Again and again, he has been asked about this. He has not said in reply, as he might well have done, that the indefinable cannot be defined. But he has continued explaining it

"Whether we stand the test or not, you alone can say, not we," said a co-worker.

"No", said Gandhiji, "I cannot presume to say that. If you can affirm that you have a living faith in God, no matter how you define God, it should be enough. You believe in some Principle, clothe it with life, and say that it is your God and you believe in it. I should think it enough. I fasted apparently with complete faith in God. But instead of God, I called the Viceroy to my aid. The *satyagrahi* has no other stay but God. For the moment, my faith in God was dead."

"But, then, an atheist like Bradlaugh may have the capacity to sacrifice all. But you would rule him out as a *satyagrahi*?"

"I am afraid I would. Such a man is worthy of my reverence; but such a one would himself say he is not a *satyagrahi* of my definition. But I may be doing an injustice to his memory. I never

had the privilege of meeting him. He might have had a living faith in an indefinable self-acting Power, whilst he declared himself an atheist."

Shri Kishorelal Mashruwala has tried to explain living faith in God in an article which was published in *Harijan*. I would venture to put it in yet another language. We use these terms of physics—light, warmth, power, activity—and derive them from outside objects. The moment we derive these not from an outside source, but from something within us, we have achieved living faith in God. The Gita defines a man with that living faith as one who gains his happiness, his peace and his light from within (*Gita* 5-24).

—Mahadeo Desai

## THE DECISION AND AFTER—IV

### AN UNDUE EMPHASIS ?

“*Ahimsa* must be placed before everything else while it is professed. Then alone it becomes irresistible. Otherwise, it will only be an empty hulk, a thing without potency or power. A soldier fights with an irresistible strength when he has blown up his bridges, burnt his boats. Even so it is with a soldier of *ahimsa*.”

It has been asked : “What about *Swaraj* that we have been fighting for? How does Gandhiji’s faith in non-violence, burning brighter than ever, help those who want *Swaraj* here and now? Does not the emphasis on non-violence of his conception make of *Swaraj* a very remote vision, hardly to be fulfilled?”

This is what he said to the Travancore friends as he explained to them his statement on the train :

“For me, it is true, as I have often declared, *ahimsa* comes before *Swaraj*. I would not care to get power through anarchy and red ruin among other things, because I want freedom and power even for the least among the people. This can only be when freedom is won through non-violence. In the other case, the weak must go to the wall, only the physically strong and fit will remain to seize and enjoy power.

“But you, too, cannot help putting *ahimsa* before everything else, if you really mean business. *Ahimsa must be placed before everything else while it is professed. Then alone it becomes irresistible. Otherwise, it will only be an empty hulk, a thing without potency or power. A soldier fights with an irresistible strength when he has blown up his bridges, burnt his boats. Even so it is with a soldier of ahimsa.*”

“But how will this lowering of the pitch work out in action? How will it help us in attaining our goal of responsible government?” asked another friend. To which Gandhiji replied :

“To-day, when we talk of responsible government, it frightens the States’ authorities. The Paramount Power, too, do not like

it. They think it will result in red ruin and anarchy. The argument is unsound, but let us give them credit for honesty. If you follow my advice, therefore you will say: 'We, for the time being, forget *Swaraj*. We shall fight to vindicate the elementary rights of the people, to remove corruption.' In short, you will concentrate your attention on details of administration. The authorities won't be frightened, and it will give you the substance of responsible government. That has been the history of all my work in India. If I had only talked of *Swaraj*, I would have come a cropper. By attacking details, we have advanced from strength to strength.

"What did I do at the time of the Dandi March? I reduced our demand for complete independence to my eleven points. Motilalji was at first angry with me. 'What do you mean by lowering the flag like this?' he said. But he soon saw that if those points were conceded, independence would stand knocking at our door.

"Let me explain to you the working of my mind. As I have already told you, I had thought that responsible government in the States was within easy reach. We have now found that we can't at once take the masses with us along non-violent lines. You say that violence is committed by a few hooligans only; but capacity to obtain non-violent *Swaraj* presupposes capacity on our part to control the hooligans too, as we temporarily did during the Non-co-operation days. If you had complete control over the forces of violence, and were ready to carry on the fight with your back to the wall in defiance of the Paramount Power, looking neither to me nor to the Congress outside for guidance or help, you would not need to lower the key temporarily even. In fact, you will not be here to seek my advice at all.

"But that is not your case, on your own admission. Nor, so far as I know, is it the case anywhere else in India. Otherwise, people would not have suspended civil disobedience in many places even without my asking."

### RESPONSIBILITY ENTIRELY WITH THE STATES

The resolution that the Working Committee of the Travancore State Congress has passed on Gandhiji's statement on Travancore makes it absolutely clear that, though he has been guiding the movement, the responsibility of giving the movement future shape belongs entirely to the Congress. "We accept Gandhiji's advice, and our acceptance is fully warranted by the circumstances," the resolution says in effect, "but the responsibility for acceptance is entirely our own." People from some of the States who have approached him for

advice do not seem to see this. He made it abundantly clear to the Mysore Congress representatives who saw him last week:

"If the proposed reforms are unacceptable, as you fear they are likely to be, you may take no part in working them. But, regarding offering any opposition to them, you must be the best judges. What I have said in my statement on Travancore does not apply wholly to any single State. You must study the general principles laid down in it, and do what you think fit. Do not ask me to judge whether Mysore is well organized or ill organized. You are the best judges. Facts themselves are opinions. If you are ready, you are ready irrespective of what I may say.

"The readiness may be of two kinds. You may be able to embarrass Government sufficiently by making a big enough demonstration which invites shooting or compels them to yield. But the demonstration may not be non-violent as I am defining it. Not that my definition has changed. There is only a difference of emphasis. I formerly compromised non-violence in the belief that thereby India would progress further on the path of non-violence, but that belief was not fulfilled. So the non-violence that you display may appear to be effective, but it may not be unadulterated non-violence in thought, word and deed. If it is not, I should rule it out. What I would *not* rule out to-day, I cannot say. I have come up to the point of saying, in the language of the *Vedic* seer, '*Neti, Neti* (Not this, not this),' but I have not yet been able to say: 'It is this, it is this.' That is because I have not seen the full light yet."

### THE MIDDLE COURSE

What, then, is this middle course which is neither naked violence nor unadulterated non-violence? Mr. Case gave the appropriate word for it—*Non-violent Coercion*—which he made the title of his book. It is open to every one. In fact, there is a school of thought in India which makes no secret of it, and says: "*Satyagraha* of Gandhiji's definition is not for us, non-violent coercion is what we understand." As Gandhiji explained:

"That school says: 'We believe both in violence and non-violence, for sometimes violence answers, sometimes non-violence answers, and we resort to non-violence because it appears to be best under the circumstances.' But for me, means and ends are convertible terms, and non-violence and truth are, therefore, the end, so long as the end conceived has not been attained. But in Rajkot, I compromised the means: I was weighed in my own scales and



found wanting. But no harm has been done because I retrieved my error immediately I saw it. My surrender was not due to weakness, it was a surrender out of the fullness of strength. It came out of non-violence, which for me is the weapon of the bravest and not of the weak. I will not be guilty of encouraging cowards amongst us, or of allowing people to hide their weakness under cover of non-violence."

What, then, can those who avow a faith in non-violence and yet confess their inability to carry it out in thought and word as well as in deed do? Must they suffer wrongs meekly and in a cowardly fashion? The way of non-violent coercion is always open to them, as the historian of this form of coercion has shown it working through history.

"You will say," said Gandhiji, "that you will not make a declaration about non-violence or *satyagraha* or civil disobedience. It need not, on that account, be the reverse of any of these. But you will say: 'After having read all that Gandhiji has written, or has been written about it in *Harijan*, we have come to the conclusion that we must not bandy about these technical expressions. Whether you call it violent or non-violent, we offer what resistance we can and what we feel our people are ready to offer.' If you want further guidance, you should approach Vallabhbhai who has been handling this movement, and Pandit Jawaharlal who is the Chairman of the States Committee. I come in as author of *satyagraha*, but for the moment I am bankrupt. My faith is brighter than ever, but I have not seen the full light. I am advising Travancore, Rajkot, and to a certain extent Talcher, as I have been constantly guiding them. But even with regard to them, I have been tendering my advice which it is for them to accept or reject.

"But I would ask you to see the Sardar who has a marvellous capacity of separating wheat from chaff. He is no visionary like Jawaharlal and me. For bravery, he is not to be surpassed. If he had any sentiment in him, he has suppressed it. Once he makes up his mind, he steels it against all argument. He has all the making of a soldier. Even I do not argue with him, but, of course, he allows me to lay down the law. He will always be the people's man. He cannot hit it off with the people in power. See him. He has studied the situation, and he may be able to make concrete suggestions. Have the setting from Jawaharlal and concrete suggestions from the Sardar."

### LOWERING THE FLAG?

I think this will settle all criticism to the effect

that Gandhiji wants people to go back to the pre-Non-co-operation days of the Liberals, when we used to go before the rulers with suppliant petitions and requests. "If," it is said, "we are asked to lower our demands in States, why not lower our demand of Independence also? That is what Gandhiji's advice will ultimately come to. We are asked to go back to the days of the Liberals, with the privilege to use the spinning-wheel and the *mantra* of non-violence!" Those who indulge in this mordant criticism do not see that our demand of Independence was not made before any ruler or rulers, but that we have made the declaration of Independence and that we cannot make it good because we have not the power to do so. And so long as we have not the power to make good our claim, what matters it whether it is sky-high or tree-high? The question of the means is the only relevant one. So far as Gandhiji is concerned, he declares it in no uncertain terms that he can no longer make any compromises with non-violence. But as for the rest, there are various ways, short of armed violence, which have proved effective in certain circumstances and on certain occasions and which it is open to them to try without any let or hindrance. Thus, all that Gandhiji asks for is absolute honesty of thought, word and deed.

—Mahadev Desai

## HOW FAR ?

“Civil liberty, consistent with the observance of non-violence, is the first step towards *Swaraj*. It is the breath of political and social life. It is the foundation of freedom. There is no room there for dilution or compromise. It is the water of life. I have never heard of water being diluted.”

With reference to my advice to the States' people to lower their demands, if necessary, a correspondent asks :

“How far are the people to go and what reduction, if any, is suggested or contemplated, for instance, in the Jaipur demand which has been practically framed by you ?”

This question would never have arisen if my language had been properly attended to. In the first place, I have added the proviso “if necessary.” This must be clearly proved and each committee should judge the necessity and the extent of the reduction. In the second, there can be no question of reduction where the people are ready for the exercise of the powers demanded, and for the sacrifice involved in the development and the consolidation of the strength to enforce the demand. Take the case of Rajkot itself. Award or no award, if the people in general had the capacity for the required measure of sacrifice, and if they had been ready for *Swaraj*, nothing would have kept them from their prize.

It would be wrong to say or believe that but for my mistake the people of Rajkot would have got what they wanted. My mistake has been admitted. But it must not be held responsible for the failure of the famous Notification. The talk of demoralization resulting from my ‘bad handling’ of the situation is nonsensical. In *satyagraha*, there is no such thing as demoralization.

<sup>1</sup> See *New Technique in Action*—p. 323

Those who are truthful, non-violent and brave do not cease to be so because of the stupidity of their leader. Of course, there would be demoralization or rather exposure, if the three virtues were put on for the occasion and were to fail on the real test being applied. People, who are strong by nature, displace weak leaders and go about their business as if they never needed a leader. If they needed one, they would soon elect a better one. Workers in the States should try to understand the Rajkot case, if they will profit by it. If it is too complicated for them, they should leave it alone and go forward as if it had not happened. Nothing will be more misleading than to think that, before my so-called mishandling of the Rajkot case, the Princes were so trembling in their shoes that they were about to abdicate their powers in favour of their people. What they were doing, before I even went to Rajkot, was to confer among themselves as to the ways and means of meeting the menace, as they thought it to be, to their very existence. We know what Limbdi did.<sup>1</sup> The talk of combining with the Muslims, the Girasias and even the Depressed Classes against the Congress workers was in the air. My action has resulted in the discovery of the unholy combination. A true diagnosis is three-fourths the remedy. The workers are to-day in a position to devise remedies to combat the combination. It simply resolves itself into the necessity of Congressmen or *satyagrahis* gaining control over the forces arrayed against them. They are as much out to gain liberty for the Muslims, Girasias, Depressed Classes and even the Princes as for themselves. The *satyagrahis* have to show by cold reasoning and their conduct that the Princes cannot remain autocrats for all time, and that it is to their interest to become trustees of their people instead of remaining their masters. In other words, what I have done by correcting myself in Rajkot is to show the true way to the *satyagrahis*. In following it, they may find it necessary to lower their immediate demands, but only so as to really hasten their progress to

<sup>1</sup> See *Lawless Limbdi*—p. 406

their goal. Therefore, there can be no lowering out of weakness. Every lowering must be out of a due appreciation of the local situation, and the capacity of the workers to cope with it. Here, there is no room for demoralization and a rout. In cases like Jaipur, of course, there can be no question of lowering. The demand itself is in the lowest pitch. There is no room in it for lowering anything. In essence, it is one for civil liberty. Civil liberty, consistent with the observance of non-violence, is the first step towards *Swaraj*. It is the breath of political and social life. It is the foundation of freedom. There is no room there for dilution or compromise. It is the water of life. I have never heard of water being diluted.

Another question has been raised by another correspondent. He says :

“You expect us to work by negotiation. But if there is no wish on the other side and the only wish is to humiliate the party of freedom, what is to be done ?”

Of course, nothing is to be done except waiting and preparing for suffering and promotion of constructive work.

Absence of wish for negotiation by authority may mean despise or distrust of the party of freedom. In either case, silent work is the remedy. Negotiation has been mentioned as a substitute for the ignoring of, *i.e.*, the despise of, the constituted authority, whether it is the Dewan or any other. And what I have pleaded for is desire and readiness for negotiation. It is not inconceivable that the stage of negotiation may never be reached. If it is not, it must not be for the fault of the *satyagrahis*.

## ITS IMPLICATIONS

“The positive implication of the Rajkot chapter in my life is the discovery that the non-violence claimed for the movement since 1920, marvellous though it was, was not unadulterated. The results, though brilliant, would have been far richer if our non-violence had been complete.”

I am sorry that my recent statements about States have perplexed even those who have hitherto had no difficulty in understanding my writings or my actions. But the Rajkot statements, my actions in Rajkot, and the statement on Travancore have made ‘confusion worse confounded.’ Pyarelal and, latterly, Mahadev have been manfully trying to interpret for the readers of *Harijan* both my writings and doings. I know that they have somewhat helped to clear misunderstandings. But I observe that something is required from me directly. I must, therefore, try to give the implications, as I understand them, of my recent writings and actions.

I had better first say what they do not imply. Thus, my ideas on civil disobedience—individual, group or mass—have not changed, nor have my views about the relations between the Congress and the Princes and the people changed. Nor has my view undergone any change that it is essential for the Paramount Power to do its duty towards the people of the States—a duty which it has woefully neglected all these years. My recantation had reference only to my distrust in God in whose name the fast was undertaken and my seeking to supplement His work by Viceregal intervention. For me to rely upon the Viceroy, instead of God or in addition to God, to act upon the Thakore Saheb, was an act of pure violence which the fast was never conceived to imply or use in the remotest degree.

The positive implication of the Rajkot chapter in my life is the discovery that the non-violence claimed

for the movement since 1920, marvellous though it was, was not unadulterated. The results, though brilliant, would have been far richer if our non-violence had been complete. A non-violent action, accompanied by non-violence in thought and word, should never produce enduring violent reaction upon the opponent. But I have observed that the movement in the States has produced violent reaction on the Princes and their advisers. They are filled with distrust of the Congress. They do not want what they call interference from it. In some cases, the very name 'Congress' is anathema. This should not have been the case.

The value of the discovery lies in its reaction upon me. I have definitely stiffened in my demands upon would-be *satyagrahis*. If my stiffness reduces the number to an insignificant figure, I should not mind. If *satyagraha* is a universal principle of universal application, I must find an effective method of action even through a handful. And when I say I see the new light only dimly, I mean that I have not yet found with certainty how a handful can act effectively. It may be, as has happened throughout my life, that I shall know the next step only after the first has been taken. I have faith that when the time for action has arrived, the plan will be found ready.

But the impatient critic will say: 'The time has always been there for action; only you have been found unready!' I cannot plead guilty. I know to the contrary. I have been for some years saying that there is no warrant for resumption of *satyagraha*.

The reasons are plain.

The Congress has ceased to be an effective vehicle for launching nation-wide *satyagraha*. It has become unwieldy, it has corruption in it, there is indiscipline among Congressmen, and rival groups have come into being which would radically change the Congress programme if they could secure a majority. That they have failed hitherto to secure it, is no comfort to me. The majority has no living faith in its own programme. In any case, *satyagraha* through a majority is not a feasible

proposition. The whole weight of the Congress should be behind any nation-wide *satyagraha*.

Then, there is the ever-growing communal tension. Final *satyagraha* is inconceivable without an honourable peace between the several communities composing the Indian nation.

Lastly, there is the provincial autonomy. I adhere to my belief that we have not done anything like justice to the task undertaken by the Congress in connection with it. It must be confessed that the Governors have on the whole played the game. There has been very little interference on their part with the ministerial actions. But the interference, sometimes irritating, has come from Congressmen and Congress organizations. Popular violence there should not have been whilst the Congressmen were in office. Much of the ministerial energy has been devoted to dealing with the demands and opposition of Congressmen. If the Ministers are unpopular, they can and should be dismissed. Instead, they have been allowed to function without the active co-operation of many Congressmen.

It will be contrary to every canon of *satyagraha* to launch upon the extreme step till every other is exhausted. Such haste will itself constitute violence.

It may be said in reply, with some justification, that if all the conditions I have mentioned are insisted upon, civil disobedience may be well-nigh impossible. Is that a valid objection? Every measure carries with it conditions for its adoption. *Satyagraha* is no exception. But I feel within me that some active form of *satyagraha*, not necessarily civil disobedience, must be available in order to end an impossible situation. India is facing an impossible situation. There must be either effective non-violent action or violence and anarchy within a measurable distance of time. I must examine this position on a future occasion.



## NON-VIOLENCE *v.* VIOLENCE

"Non-violence is never a method of coercion, it is one of conversion. We have failed to convert the Princes, we have failed to convert the English administrators. It is no use saying that it is impossible to persuade persons willingly to part with their power."

I must resume the argument about the implications of the Rajkot step, where I left it the week before.

In theory, if there is sufficient non-violence developed in any single person, he should be able to discover the means of combating violence, no matter how widespread or severe, within his jurisdiction. I have repeatedly admitted my imperfections. I am no example of perfect *ahimsa* I am evolving. Such *ahimsa*, as has been developed in me, has been found enough to cope with situations that have hitherto arisen. But to-day I feel helpless in the face of the surrounding violence. There was a penetrating article in *The Statesman* on my Rajkot statement. The editor had therein contended that the English had never taken our movement to be true *satyagraha*, but being practical people they had allowed the myth to continue, though they had known it to be a violent revolt. It was none the less so, because the rebels had no arms. I have quoted the substance from memory. When I read the article, I felt the force of the argument. Though I had intended the movement to be pure non-violent resistance, as I look back upon the happenings of those days, there was undoubtedly violence among the resisters. I must own that had I been perfectly tuned to the music of *ahimsa*, I would have sensed the slightest departure from it and my sensitiveness would have rebelled against any discord in it.

It seems to me that the united action of the Hindus and the Muslims blinded me to the violence that was lurking in the breasts of many. The English, who are

trained diplomats and administrators, are accustomed to the line of least resistance, and when they found that it was more profitable to conciliate a big organization than to crush it by extensive frightfulness, they yielded to the extent that they thought was necessary. It is, however, my conviction that our resistance was predominantly non-violent in action and will be accepted as such by the future historian. As a seeker of truth and non-violence, however, I must not be satisfied with mere action if it is not from the heart. I must declare from the house-tops that the non-violence of those days fell far short of the non-violence as I have so often defined.

Non-violent action without the co-operation of the heart and the head cannot produce the intended result. The failure of our imperfect *ahimsa* is visible to the naked eye. Look at the feud that is going on between Hindus and Muslims. Each is arming for the fight with the other. The violence that we had harboured in our breasts during the Non-co-operation days is now recoiling upon ourselves. The violent energy that was generated among the masses, but was kept under check in the pursuit of a common objective, has now been let loose and is being used among and against ourselves.

The same phenomenon is discernible, though in a less crude manner, in the dissension among Congressmen themselves, and the use of forcible methods that the Congress Ministers are obliged to adopt in running the administrations under their charge.

This narrative clearly shows that the atmosphere is surcharged with violence. I hope it also shows that non-violent mass movement is an impossibility unless the atmosphere is radically changed. To blind one's eyes to the events happening around us, is to court disaster. It has been suggested to me that I should declare mass civil disobedience and all internal strife will cease, Hindus and Muslims will compose their differences, Congressmen will forget mutual jealousies and fights for power. My reading of the situation is wholly different. If any mass movement is undertaken at the present moment in the name of non-violence, it will resolve itself

into violence largely unorganized and organized in some cases. It will bring discredit on the Congress, spell disaster for the Congress struggle for independence and bring ruin to many a home. This may be a wholly untrue picture born of my weakness. If so, unless I shed that weakness, I cannot lead a movement which requires great strength and resolution.

But if I cannot find an effective purely non-violent method, outbreak of violence seems to be a certainty. The people demand self-expression. They are not satisfied with the constructive programme prescribed by me and accepted almost unanimously by the Congress. As I have said before, the imperfect response to the constructive programme is itself proof positive of the skin-deep nature of the non-violence of Congressmen.

But if there is an outbreak of violence, it would not be without cause. We are yet far from the independence of our dream. The irresponsibility of the Centre, which eats up 80 per cent of the revenue, grinds down the people and thwarts their aspirations, is daily proving more and more intolerable.

There is a growing consciousness of the terrible autocracy of the majority of the States. I admit my responsibility for the suspension of civil resistance in several States. This has resulted in demoralization both among the people and the Princes. The people have lost nerve and feel that all is lost. The demoralization among the Princes consists in their thinking that now they have nothing to fear from their people, nothing substantial to grant. Both are wrong. The result does not dismay me. In fact, I had foretold the possibility of these results when I was discussing with the Jaipur workers the advisability of suspending the movement, even though it was well circumscribed with rules and restrictions. The demoralization among the people shows that there was not non-violence in thought and word, and, therefore, when the intoxication and excitement of jail-going and the accompanying demonstrations ceased, they thought that the struggle was over. The Princes came to the hasty conclusion that they could safely consolidate their

autocracy by adopting summary measures against the resisters and placating the docile element by granting eye-wash reforms.

Both the people and the Princes might have reacted in the right manner—the people by recognizing the correctness of my advice and calmly generating strength and energy by quiet and determined constructive effort, and the Princes by seizing the opportunity, afforded by suspension, of doing justice for the sake of justice and granting reforms that would satisfy the reasonable but advanced section among their people. This could only happen, if they recognized the time spirit. It is neither too late for the people nor the Princes.

In this connection, I may not omit the Paramount Power. There are signs of the Paramount Power repenting of the recent declarations about the freedom to the Princes to grant such reforms to their people as they chose. There are audible whispers that the Princes may not take those declarations literally. It is an open secret that the Princes dare not do anything that they guess is likely to displease the Paramount Power. They may not even meet persons whom the Paramount Power may not like them to meet. When there is this tremendous influence exercised over the Princes, it is but natural to hold the Paramount Power responsible for the unadulterated autocracy that reigns supreme in many States.

So, if violence breaks out in this unfortunate land, the responsibility will have to be shared by the Paramount Power, the Princes, and above all by Congressmen. The first two have never claimed to be non-violent. Their power is frankly derived from and based on the use of violence. But the Congress has since 1920 adopted non-violence as its settled policy and has undoubtedly striven to act up to it. But as Congressmen never had non-violence in their hearts, they must reap the fruit of the defect, however unintentional it was. At the crucial moment, the defect has come to the surface and the defective method does not seem to meet the situation. Non-violence is never a method of coercion, it is one of conversion. We have failed to convert the Prin-

ces, we have failed to convert the English administrators. It is no use saying that it is impossible to persuade persons willingly to part with their power. I have claimed that *satyagraha* is a new experiment. It will be time to pronounce it a failure when Congressmen have given it a genuine trial. Even a policy, if it is honestly pursued, has to be pursued with all one's heart. We have not done so. Hence, Congressmen have to convert themselves before the Paramount Power and the Princes can be expected to act justly.

But if Congressmen can or will go no further than they have done in the direction of non-violence, and if the Paramount Power and the Princes do not voluntarily and selfishly do the right thing, the country must be prepared for violence, unless the new technique yields a new mode of non-violent action which will become an effective substitute for violence as a way of securing redress of wrongs. The fact that violence must fail will not prevent its outbreak. Mere constitutional agitation will not do.

## “RAJKOT—WAS IT A BETRAYAL?”

“If any action of mine, claimed to be spiritual, is proved to be unpractical, it must be pronounced to be a failure. I do believe the most spiritual act is the most practical in the true sense of the term.”

“I have always felt that whatever Gandhiji has done at any time from his spiritual stand-point, has been proved to be correct from the practical point. He is not great for his enunciation of spiritual theories, which are to be found in the scriptures of all countries. His contribution to the world is his showing the way to put into practice, in the ordinary day-to-day life, those great spiritual theories. For me, if any of Gandhiji’s actions done from a spiritual point of view failed to prove that it was *the* correct thing to be done from a practical stand-point, then he would be considered to have failed to that extent. Let me apply that test to what he did in Rajkot.

“When he discovered that his fast became vitiated by his having requested H. E. the Viceroy to intervene, he renounced the Gwyer Award. The practical effect was to free him from Rajkot. But did his renunciation free the Viceroy from the obligation of seeing that the Rajkot Notification was acted upon according to the Chief Justice’s interpretation? In my opinion, Gandhiji’s renunciation casts a double duty on the Viceroy. And if the Viceroy does not perform his duty, the people of Rajkot are free to act as they choose, and the Congress will have a powerful case against the Viceroy if the Notification proved abortive.”

This is an abridgment of an article sent by a noted Congressman for publication in *Harijan*. He has built up an elaborate case in defence of my action regarding Rajkot, in reply to the criticism that I had betrayed the cause of the Rajkot people. The heading of this note is the correspondent’s. I need not weary the reader with the whole of his argument. After all, time alone is the true test. It will finally show whether my action was right or wrong. But the abridgment is given for the novelty of the thought about the Viceroy’s duty. I had no thought of the consequence of the renunciation. As

soon as I saw that my fast had become tainted for my seeking Viceregal intervention, I renounced the Award. But now that my correspondent mentions it, I must admit the force of his reasoning. My renunciation should act as a double spur to the Viceregal duty of seeing that the Rajkot Notification No. 50 is carried out according to the interpretation put upon it by the Chief Justice. So far as I am concerned, my renunciation debars me, in this instance, from invoking Viceregal intervention. I also endorse the correspondent's statement that if any action of mine, claimed to be spiritual, is proved to be unpractical, it must be pronounced to be a failure. I do believe the most spiritual act is the most practical in the true sense of the term.

## RAJKOT REFORMS

“Those citizens of Rajkot who have any sense of self-respect must abstain from co-operation in them (reforms). They will, if they take my advice, watch, wait, pray and literally spin. They will find that they will be also spinners of real liberty in Rajkot in the non-violent way which is the only true way.”

Having once offended, however unwittingly, against the Thakore Saheb of Rajkot and Durbar Shri Viravala, I have restrained myself against saying anything by way of criticism of the Durbar's doings in that State. But duty to the people of Rajkot, who have shown exemplary discipline, demands a word from me on the reforms just announced. They expect me to give my opinion on them. It pains me to have to say that they have undone what the late Thakore Saheb had done. The adult franchise, which it was the late Thakore Saheb's boon lasting 15 years, has been revoked, and it has been reduced to the possession of property qualifications and a stiff residential test. The elected President gives place to the Dewan as permanent President. The original Sabha, which was wholly composed of elected representatives, is to contain 40 elected members against 20 nominated. The elected members will be sub-divided into minorities. The so-called majority will thus become really a minority. The natural course of reforms is progressive increase of popular control. Here, without the slightest justification, popular control has been materially reduced. The original Sabha had wide powers of legislation. These have been curtailed.

There was a definite announcement that the privy purse was to be fixed. The reforms ignore the announcement. The Notification of December 26th last was to transfer to the people 'the widest powers possible.' My reading of them leads me to the conclusion that not only



have the powers already possessed by the people been taken away, but they have been limited as much as possible. In one word, the Thakore Saheb's, *i.e.*, the Dewan's will is to be the Supreme Law in Rajkot.

I am sorry to have to write these lines. I do not know whether these reforms are the last act of the tragedy for which my violence is responsible. A fast is a remedy to be applied only by an expert. It interrupts the even course of a movement for better. The slightest touch of violence damages it. I have admitted that my appeal to the Viceroy against the acts of the Thakore Saheb, whilst the fast was pending, was violence and vitiated the fast. I had thought that I had paid the penalty by repentance, and that the happy relations established between the Thakore Saheb and Durbar Shri Viravala and me would open a new and bright chapter for the people of Rajkot. The *darbar* held in my honour, after my public repentance, seemed to have set the seal on the good that the repentance had done. I see I was mistaken. Men's natures are not changed in a moment. I apologize to the people of Rajkot.

But I do not repent of my repentance. I am quite sure that what was morally right was also politically right. My repentance saved the people of Rajkot from a worse fate. It averted a communal clash. I am quite sure that in the end the people of Rajkot will come to their own. Meanwhile, the evil, that the reforms in my opinion are, must be allowed to work itself out. Those citizens of Rajkot who have any sense of self-respect must abstain from co-operation in working them. They will, if they take my advice, watch, wait, pray and literally spin. They will find that they will be also spinners of real liberty in Rajkot in the non-violent way which is the only true way.

## RAJKOT REFORMS

“If the reforms prove to be what they are claimed to be in the note, no one will be more glad than I.”

I have seen the Rajkot State note on reforms. The contradiction makes no impression on me. I adhere to every word of what I have said. Events will show what the reforms mean. Though I did not use Shri Dhebar's name in my article, the framer of the State note has gratuitously brought him in to enable him to signify his displeasure towards the one man who has been admitted in my presence as a true and brave reformer. He will survive all the attacks made on him. If the reforms prove to be what they are claimed to be in the note, no one will be more glad than I. The authorities are, however, entitled to congratulations on their having secured the approval of six out of the ten nominees for the aborted Constitution Committee. That is, indeed, a defeat for the State Parishad and me. This *volte face* is a good specimen of Kathiawad politics. But I have no right to complain. Even if all the ten, including Dhebarbhai, had accepted the Rajkot reforms, my analysis, if it is true to facts—as I hold it is— would not be affected. Only, it would be of no effect if all those who wanted something were satisfied with less than what they had. In that sense, therefore, Rajkot authorities have undoubtedly won.

## THE FIRST LESSON

“There is no *Swaraj* without non-violence, nothing that goes by the name of constructive work. Constructive work is a mild aspect of non-violence, but the true test of non-violence lies in acquiring the capacity to meet an innocent and unflinching death in the service of our cause.”

*In a message to the States People's Conference in Jaipur, presided over by Seth Jammalal Bajaj, Gandhiji said :*

Every one who cares to study what is happening at the present moment in our country can see that what we want can be attained if we will but achieve the *mantra* of peace, the creed of non-violence. You cannot breed peace out of no-peace. The attempt is like gathering grapes of thorns or figs of thistles. The more I go into the question, the more forcibly the conclusion is borne in upon me that our first duty is to grasp this fundamental fact. There was a day when I used to flatter myself with the belief that I had mastered the key to learning that lesson. To-day I am filled with doubt. I do not know that I have in me purification enough to realize true peace or non-violence. In that frame of mind I cannot think of any other thing, talk of any other thing. But whatever may be my condition, I have no doubt in my mind that there is no *Swaraj* without non-violence, nothing that goes by the name of constructive work. Constructive work is a mild aspect of non-violence, but the true test of non-violence lies in acquiring the capacity to meet an innocent and unflinching death in the service of our cause. How to achieve it is the question. I want you to apply your minds to it.

## THE BAN ON JAMNALALJI

"The externment of one man, however great, may appear to be insignificant. But events may prove that it was a foolish and costly affair, if not much more."

The ban on Jamnalalji makes curious reading. Here it is :

"To

SETH JAMNALAL BAJAJ

of Wardha (C. P.)

Whereas it has been made to appear to the Jaipur Government that your presence and activities within the Jaipur State are likely to lead to a breach of the peace, it is considered necessary in the public interest and for the maintenance of public tranquillity to prohibit your entry within the Jaipur State.

You are, therefore, required not to enter Jaipur territory until further orders.

By order of the Council of State

(Sd.) M. ALTAH A. KHERIE

Secretary, Council of State, Jaipur."

He is the last person whose presence anywhere can be a danger. He has ever been known as a peace-maker. He has enjoyed the happiest relations with the official world. His worth was so much recognized that he was awarded the title of Rai Bahadur in 1916 or thereabouts. This he returned during the Non-co-operation days. He is one of the best known merchants in the commercial world. He is a banker besides being a commercial magnate. Though an ardent Congressman, he has never been known as "an agitator." He is foremost in constructive work and social reform. True, he has the courage of his convictions and has more than once staked his all for these. He is never afraid of prison. Obviously, the description given in the order served upon Jamnalalji is false and wholly inapplicable to him. It will

be probably urged that the wording is a mere formality, and that without it the order could not be legally served upon him. If that be so, it proves conclusively that persons like Jamnalalji were never meant by the law to be affected by it. It is an abuse, pure and simple, of the law to keep a person like Jamnalalji out of Jaipur or any other part of the country.

And the humorous part of it all is, that Jamnalalji had to be described in the order as 'of Wardha.' As a matter of fact, he belongs to the Jaipur State, has property there, and has many relations residing there.

It is to such an order that Jamnalalji has submitted wholly on my advice. There was a rumour that he might be arrested if he attempted to enter Jaipur. He had, therefore, consulted me as to his duty if an order was served on him. His co-workers of Jaipur had held that he should defy any such order there and then. I held a contrary opinion. And I have no cause to regret my opinion. The order, I reasoned with myself, would be a mad act. Mad people should not be taken at their word. They should be given time to cool down. I understand that great preparations were made in anticipation of the arrest. There must have even been a kind of disappointment when the arresting party discovered that they were not to have their prey.

Jamnalalji has lost nothing by waiting and reasoning with the authorities and telling them that they have acted wrongly and hastily. As a responsible man and Jaipur subject, it was perhaps his duty to give them time to reconsider their decision. If they do not, and Jamnalalji decides, as he must, to defy the order, he will do so with added moral strength and prestige. And it is moral strength that counts in non-violent action.

Let it be known that the Maharaja is merely a tool in the hands of his ministers who are all outsiders and some of them English. They know nothing of the people or the country. They are, as it were, imposed upon them. Jaipur talent is at a discount, though before the foreigners came, Jaipur was somehow or other able to hold its own as a State. I had reason to remark last week on the sorry

figure the English Dewan cut in Rajkot during his very brief term of office.<sup>1</sup> At least the act of the Jaipur Council consisting of outsiders is a sorry exhibition of irresponsibility and ineptitude. The externment of one man, however great, may appear to be insignificant. But events may prove that it was a foolish and costly affair, if not much more. For, the reader may not know that there is a Praja Mandal in Jaipur which has been working under Jamnalalji's inspiration for the past six years. Jamnalalji is its present President. The Mandal is a strong organization containing responsible men as its members and has a good record of constructive work to its credit. The Mandal will have to do its duty if the ban is not removed. For, the ban is, it is said, a precursor of stopping even the constructive and constitutional activities of the Mandal. The authorities cannot brook the growing influence of a body which aims at responsible government in Jaipur under the aegis of the Maharaja, no matter by means howsoever honourable. It seems to be the precursor also of ruthless policy of stopping all activities of bodies having political ambition in any shape or form. And rumour has it that it is a concerted policy on the part of the Rajputana States. Whether it is true only of Jaipur or all the other States, it is sufficiently ominous, and Jamnalalji and the people of Jaipur are in honour bound to resist it with all the strength at their command, no doubt consistently with Congress creed of non-violence and truth.

<sup>1</sup> See *Rajkot*—p. 101.

## JAIPUR

"It is time for the Princes and the Central Government to evolve a common policy of action. Or, is the Jaipur method the common policy of action as some tell me it is? I can only hope that it is not."

Jaipur authorities will not be happy until they have brought the Jaipur patriots to their senses. For, they have now banned the Jaipur Rajya Praja Mandal of which Jamnalalji is the President. Jamnalalji has released for publication his letter to the President of the Jaipur Council of State. The readers will find it elsewhere in these columns.<sup>1</sup> That letter should induce withdrawal of the order. But, evidently, the Jaipur Council, which I erroneously described as entirely composed of outsiders in my last week's article, but which I understand does contain four members from the State, is intent upon wiping out of existence every activity whether social, humanitarian or other with which Jamnalalji or his co-workers are connected.

This is the newest method of dealing with people whom the authorities do not like. I can only hope against hope that the Jaipur authorities will shrink from precipitating an all-India crisis. For, there are three reasons which might well give the Jaipur question that character. Jamnalalji is himself an institution. He is, moreover, a member of the Working Committee of the Congress and its Treasurer. The method being adopted in Jaipur is too drastic to be suffered without a desperate struggle. If it goes unchallenged, it may mean a death-blow to every activity in the States, when it is even remotely connected with the legitimate political aspirations of their people.

<sup>1</sup> Omitted.

The curious thing about Jaipur is that the real ruler is a high-placed Englishman, and not the Maharaja. Can it be that he represents the wishes of the Central Authority? If he does, what becomes of the recent declarations? If he does not, may an English Dewan initiate policies that may in the end spell disaster to the State itself? I understand that the Jaipur treasure-chest is over-full. If the worst happened, it could stand a prolonged boycott by the people, that is, assuming that the modern weapons of destruction do not tame the people into submission. It is time for the Princes and the Central Government to evolve a common policy of action. Or, is the Jaipur method the common policy of action as some tell me it is? I can only hope that it is not.



## CONGRESS AND STATES

“Constitutionalism, legality and such other things are good enough within their respective spheres, but they become a drag upon human progress immediately the human mind has broken these artificial bonds and flies higher.”

*A special correspondent of The Times of India interviewed Gandhiji on the 24th inst. at Bardoli. In reply to the correspondent's question as to what Gandhiji meant by saying in the last week's Harijan that "an all-India crisis" would occur if the Jaipur authorities persisted in prohibiting the entry of Seth Jammalal Bajaj into the State, Gandhiji replied :*

“Seth Jammalal is an all-India man, though a subject of Jaipur. He is also a member of the Congress Working Committee, and essentially and admittedly a man of peace. He is the president of an organization which has been working and has been allowed to work in Jaipur for some years. Its activities have always been open. It contains well-known workers who are sober by disposition and who have done much constructive work, both among men and women. There is at the head of affairs in Jaipur a distinguished politico-military officer. He is shaping the policy of the State in connection with the ban pronounced against Jammalalji and his association, the Jaipur Rajya Praja Mandal. I take it that Sir Beauchamp St. John, Prime Minister of Jaipur, would not be acting without at least the tacit approval of the Central Authority, without whose consent he could not become the Prime Minister of an important State like Jaipur.

“If the action of the Jaipur authorities precipitates a first class crisis, it is impossible for the Indian National Congress and, therefore, all India, to stand by and look on with indifference whilst Jammalalji, for no offence whatsoever, is imprisoned and members of the Praja

Mandal are dealt with likewise. The Congress will be neglecting its duty if, having power, it shrank from using it and allowed the spirit of the people of Jaipur to be crushed for want of support from the Congress. This is the sense in which I have said that the example of Jaipur, or say Rajkot, might easily lead to an all-India crisis.

"The policy of non-intervention by the Congress was, in my opinion, a perfect piece of statesmanship when the people of the States were not awakened. That policy would be cowardice when there is all-round awakening among the people of the States and a determination to go through a long course of suffering for the vindication of their just rights. If once this is recognized, the struggle for liberty, wherever it takes place, is the struggle for all India. Whenever the Congress thinks it can usefully intervene, it must intervene."

*In answer to a further question how the Congress as an institution and the Congress Ministries in the various provinces were justified in precipitating a crisis on an issue which exclusively concerned a State, Gandhiji said :*

"Supposing in a particular district in British India the Collector butchered the people of that district, is or is not the Congress justified in intervening and precipitating an all-India crisis? If the answer is 'Yes,' then, it applies to Jaipur also for examining the conduct of the Congress in terms of intervention. If there had been no non-intervention resolution by the Congress, this question really would not have arisen. Therefore, unthinking people very often blame me for having said that constitutionally Indian States were foreign States. I do not accept that blame at all. I was wandering about in the States and I knew as a matter of fact that the people of the States were not ready.

"The moment they became ready, the legal, constitutional and artificial boundary was destroyed. This is a tremendous moral question. Constitutionalism, legality and such other things are good enough within their respective spheres, but they become a drag upon human progress immediately the human mind has broken these

artificial bonds and flies higher. That is precisely what is happening before my eyes. Without any spur from any outside agency, I saw at once that there must be intervention by the Congress of the type you see to-day. And it will go on from stage to stage, if the Congress remains the moral force that it has become—in other words, if the Congress lives up to its policy of non-violence.

“People say that I have changed my view, that I say to-day something different from what I said years ago. The fact of the matter is that conditions have changed. I am the same. My words and deeds are dictated by prevailing conditions. There has been a gradual evolution in my environment and I react to it as a *satyagrahi*.”

*The correspondent next drew Gandhiji's attention to recent developments in Rajkot and in Baroda, where the minorities were protesting against the Congress dictation. Gandhiji said in reply that he was unperturbed by those developments. He said :*

“The movement for liberty cannot possibly be withdrawn or arrested because there are at the moment so-called communal splits. I see that history is repeating itself and the power that is losing ground is becoming desperate and fomenting trouble and dissension within, hoping to drag on its existence by means of these dissensions. If the people knew how to work the non-violent technique, the powers that are acting in this manner will be confounded and the people will rise victorious.

“The Muslims in Rajkot, for instance, have everything to gain by the people of Rajkot securing liberty. They are to-day depending upon the sweet will, not of the Rulers but of the advisers of the Rulers; to-morrow they will share power with the people because they are of the people. But I really do not believe that there is real Muslim opposition in Rajkot. They have enjoyed the best relations with the Hindus. I know this from personal experience myself. During the three months' brief but brilliant struggle, there was no dissension between the Hindus and the Muslims in Rajkot. Though many Muslims did not court imprisonment, the Muslims, as a community remained at the back of the agitation.

“I really do not understand this unfortunate squabble in Baroda. I am as yet too paralyzed to get a full grasp of the situation. There again, what can Maharashtrians lose if there is self-rule in Baroda? They are powerful enough to assert themselves. It is not as if they will be crushed by the so-called Gujarati majority. And, if the majority gets its share of the crumbs of office, that should not be a matter for non-participation by the Maharashtrians in the struggle for liberty. Hence, though I have not been able to fathom the bottom of this quarrel, I have no misgivings so long as the reformers remain non-violent and do not harbour any ill-will against the Maharashtrians for their action. The question dwindles into insignificance, so far as Baroda is concerned, when it is remembered that against its population of 2,500,000 there are only a few thousands of Maharashtrians mostly to be found in Baroda city itself.”

## JAIPUR

"The Congress cannot wait and watch, whilst it has the power, and allow the people of Jaipur to die of mental and moral starvation, especially when this denial of a natural right is backed by British might."

The reader should know the distinction between the Jaipur struggle and the Rajkot one.

The Rajkot struggle is frankly for responsible government within the State and is now for redeeming the Ruler's promise to his people. Every man and woman of Rajkot, if they have any stuff in them, will be reduced to dust in resisting the dishonourable conduct of the British Resident.

The Jaipur struggle is on a very small and narrow issue. The one political association of Jaipur has been virtually declared illegal for the offence of pleading for responsible government, and its President, himself a resident of Jaipur, has been put under a ban. The civil disobedience struggle will cease, the moment the bans are lifted and the right of free association, holding public meetings, etc., is conceded. But, here again, the British lion has opened out his big claws. The British Prime Minister of Jaipur had a chat with Barrister Chudgar, legal adviser of the Rao Rana of Sikar. He reported to Seth Jamnalalji the following purport of the talk :

"I understand it my duty to inform you that during my interview with Sir Beauchamp St. John, Prime Minister of Jaipur, in connection with Sikar affairs on the 9th inst. (January), at about 11 A.M. at his bungalow Natanika Bagh, I had some discussion with him regarding the Jaipur situation. The following is the substance of the discussion:

"I told Sir Beauchamp that the ban against your entry into Jaipur State territories came as a painful surprise to millions of people all over India, particularly because you are well known to be a man of peace and your mission was to supervise and direct famine relief activities in the famine-stricken parts of Jai-

pur State. To this Sir Beauchamp replied that he agreed that you are a man of peace, but you and your men's visit, he thought, would bring you and your men in contact with the masses in the famine-stricken areas, and this he did not like for obvious political reasons. I told him that you cannot be expected to submit to the order for an indefinite period, and that it would be better in the interests of the State and the people, in view of the statement you have published in the Press after you had been served with the order, if the order were recalled so that unnecessary trouble may be avoided. He was adamant, and he said that he was prepared to meet any situation that might arise if you disobeyed the order. He said that the Congressmen are out for a revolution by means of a non-violent struggle. But non-violence, he said, was a force as powerful or perhaps more powerful than violence. He further said Indians were playing upon the humane instincts in the English race, but if there was Japan or Herr Hitler instead of the English in India, we could not have succeeded so well with our non-violence.

"He, then, said that it was his considered opinion that non-violence, however strict, must be met by violence, and his reply to the non-violent movement in Jaipur would be the 'machine-gun.' I pointed out to him that all Englishmen were not of his way of thinking, and even the English race as such would not agree with him. He said: 'That may or may not be so,' but personally he was of the opinion that there was no difference between non-violence and violence, and that there would be nothing wrong in using violence against non-violence.

"If you or Mahatmaji desire to make use of this statement, I have no objection."

I considered this to be so startling that I referred it to the Prime Minister in the following letter (18-1-39):

"My first thought was to publish the accompanying letter purporting to describe your attitude with regard to the ban on Seth Jamnalalji's entry into Jaipur State. But, on second thoughts, I felt that my purpose would be better served by sending you a copy of Shri Chudgar's letter and inviting your opinion on it. My purpose is to promote harmony between the Princes and the people and between English officials and the people who are obliged in one way or the other to come in contact with them, to secure justice wherever possible by friendly negotiation. And now that I have felt the necessity of writing to you, whatever may be your opinion on Shri Chudgar's letter, I would like to suggest to you that the bans upon Seth Jamnalalji and his organization might be removed without endangering the peace of Jaipur State. Indeed, I feel that peace is certainly endangered by the bans."

The Prime Minister replied as follows (20-1-39):

"I write to acknowledge your kind letter of the 18th instant, enclosing a copy of a letter from Mr. Chudgar to Seth Jamnalal Bajaj. Your hesitation in publishing it before you had ascertained the correctness of its contents was a wise step, which I personally much appreciate, as I am now able to inform you that its description of my views is completely erroneous. I am unable to understand how Mr. Chudgar so misunderstood me, as I may say that this incident confirms me in my hesitation to grant any such interviews in future.

"Now that you are aware of the facts, I am sure your reluctance to publish such a letter will be confirmed. Should, however, you decide otherwise, I shall be glad if you can inform me, as soon as practicable, so that I can take suitable action.

"With renewed thanks for your consideration."

I replied as under (22-1-39):

"I thank you for your prompt reply to my letter of the 18th instant. I had expected your version of the interview, if you repudiated Shri Chudgar's version. The matter is too important to be dropped by me. I shall gladly publish your version together with Shri Chudgar's, if you so wish."

To this, there came the following reply (25-1-39):

"Many thanks for your letter of the 22nd instant.

"I am sure you will sympathize with me in my natural hesitation to make a record of an interview, which was understood to be private and personal, when the other party to the interview has already threatened to publish an erroneous version. Such a procedure can, as I am sure you will agree, only lead to acrimony, and so far as I can see, serve no useful purpose.

"Should, however, Mr. Chudgar see fit to publish his erroneous version, I am sure you will give me due warning so that, as I have already said, I may take suitable action."

To this, I replied again as follows (27-1-39):

"I thank you for yours of the 25th instant.

"I am afraid I cannot sympathize with you in your hesitation. The report Shri Chudgar has sent is too valuable not to be published. My concern was to see that I did not give currency to a report whose accuracy could be successfully challenged.

"I am in correspondence with Shri Chudgar, and if he adheres to the report he has given to Seth Jamnalalji, I may feel compelled to publish it in the interest of the cause of the people of Jaipur.

"I have not understood the meaning of 'suitable action' to be taken by you in the event of publication of Shri Chudgar's version."

I referred the correspondence to Shri Chudgar, and he has sent me the copy of the following letter he has addressed to Shri Jamnalalji (28-1-39):

"I have read the correspondence between Mahatmaji and Sir W. Beauchamp St. John ending with Mahatmaji's letter to him dated the 27th inst. I have carefully read my letter to you dated the 15th inst. again, and I say that what I have stated in that letter is a substantially correct reproduction of the conversation between me and Sir Beauchamp."

The Prime Minister's letters have made strange reading. I had asked for bread, he has sent me a stone. He will pardon me if I believe Shri Chudgar's version, unless he can give his own. His mere denial, accompanied by a threat, carries no weight.

The Congress cannot wait and watch, whilst it has the power, and allow the people of Jaipur to die of mental and moral starvation, especially when this denial of a natural right is backed by British might. If the Prime Minister has no authority to do what he is doing, let him at least be recalled.



## “BARBAROUS BEHAVIOUR”

“That a British Inspector-General of Police should resort to deception and then to personal injury to one who was his prisoner is what I call organized *goondaism*.”

*Gandhiji issued the following telephone report about the second arrest of Seth Jamnalalji :*

“Jamnalalji was detained at Ajmer Road station, 50 miles from Jaipur, and kept in the dak bungalow there. Mr. Young went to Jamnalalji in person and asked him to enter his car. Jamnalalji declined saying: ‘You wish to put me outside the border of Jaipur State. I will not accompany you.’

Mr. Young thereupon said: ‘We are taking you to Jaipur, come with us.’

Jamnalalji replied: ‘I cannot rely on your word.’

Mr. Young, then, said: ‘I have orders. You will have to come with me.’

Jamnalalji asked to be shown the order, but it appears that there was no order in Mr. Young’s possession. At length, Mr. Young again told Jamnalalji that he would be taken to Jaipur. ‘If we do not take you there, you can have it printed in the newspapers that after promising to take you to Jaipur, we took you elsewhere.’

Jamnalalji was not inclined to believe anything that was said to him. He said: ‘I will not accompany you willingly. You can take me by force, if you so desire.’

This conversation took nearly an hour. In the end, five men forcibly put Jamnalalji in a car and took him away. In this process of using force, Jamnalalji was injured on his left cheek below the eye. He was taken to Alwar State. Jamnalalji here said: ‘You cannot act like this. You are not at liberty to deposit me in another State. If you do so, I will run a case against you.’

On this, Mr. Young brought Jamnalalji back again into Jaipur State, but we do not know his present whereabouts.”

The only remark I have to offer is that this is barbarous behaviour. The sacredness of person, legal procedure and liberty are thrown to the winds. That a British Inspector-General of Police should resort to deception and then to personal injury to one who was his

prisoner is what I call organized *goondaism*. But I know that nothing will break Jamnalalji's spirit. He will enter Jaipur either as a free man or a prisoner.

## MY APOLOGY

"I find that I have unconsciously done an injustice to Mr. Young, whom in my Press statement I accused of having practised deception upon Sethji.....I, therefore, tender my unqualified apology to Mr. Young."

On reading my Press statement regarding his second expulsion from Jaipur State, Seth Jammnalalji telegraphed to me as follows on the 9th instant :

"Saw statement. Much version regarding Young incorrect owing confusion telephonic message. Correct version appears *Hindustan Times* eighth ninth. Hope do needful."

I had not, then, seen *The Hindustan Times* referred to by Sethji. I have now seen both the issues, and I find that I have unconsciously done an injustice to Mr. Young, whom in my Press statement I accused of having practised deception upon Sethji. I made the accusation on the strength of the telephone message received by his son in Wardha of which I gave a literal translation in my statement. Sethji's son had no doubt whatsoever as to what he received through the telephone. But neither his accuracy nor my faithful translation can excuse the error into which I was betrayed. I, therefore, tender my unqualified apology to Mr. Young, and I shall be extra-careful henceforth in making use of telephone messages.

I see that not only was Mr. Young not guilty of any deception, but he was careful to say that he was performing a painful duty in obedience to the orders of superior authority. And, in the execution thereof, he was as courteous and as careful as it was possible for him to be in the circumstances.

Having made these amends, I must say that *The Hindustan Times* report, confirmed by Sethji, shows that his ill-treatment was much worse than conveyed in the telephone message. All that night journey in the cold

of Rajputana in winter was a cruel and unnecessary torture. Even if expulsion was necessary for the preservation of peace in Jaipur, the night journey could surely have been avoided, as also the use of force.

*In the next issue of Harijan, Gandhiji referred to Seth Jamnalal's arrest as follows:*

After all the Jaipur Durbar has been obliged to arrest Seth Jamnalalji. It is reported that he is decently housed, though kept in an out-of-the-way place under a strong guard. There seems to be secrecy about everything. I suggest that the authorities make a public statement as to his whereabouts, the facilities given to him, and the conditions as to correspondence and interviews. Is medical assistance easily available?

But if what one hears about Shekhavati is true, the detention and treatment under detention of Sethji is of minor account. In the absence of detailed news on behalf of the State, the public are bound to give credence to the statements appearing in the Press.

## JAIPUR CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

“*Swaraj* within the States is not to be obtained by any non-violent trick. It will be won, if it is to be won, by non-violence of the strong, *i.e.*, by hard work, patient and mute suffering, service of the poor, the hungry and the forsaken of society, and a voluntary obedience to the laws of the State and society, in so far as they are not repugnant to public and private morals.”

The cry comes from Jaipur that some civil resisters are disappointed over the suspension and are not as enthusiastic to tackle the constructive programme, which is chiefly the spinning-wheel and *Khadi*, as they were for fight. If this is the general feeling, the suspension is doubly justified. For, the reluctance betrays lack of appreciation of *ahimsa* without which resistance becomes a species of violence. Those who lightly talk of freedom in the States and hope to attain it through civil resistance, evidently do not know what they are talking about. Will they not learn the lesson of the Provinces? Provincial autonomy, such as it is, has been won by civil resistance, however inferior it may have been. But do they not realize that it is likely to break down if Congress Ministers cannot carry on without the aid of the police and the military, *i.e.*, without British guns. If the partial autonomy was won by non-violent means, it must be held also by such means and no other. From recent experiences, it seems clear that the country is not ready to hold power through non-violent means. Though for the past twenty years—the period of the greatest mass awakening—the people have been taught to abjure the use of arms, including brickbats and the *lathi*, and to rely upon non-violence pure and simple, we know that Congress Ministries have been obliged to resort to violence to suppress popular violence, real or imaginary. It is clear also that the country cannot be made ready for the use of violence

without training. Was our non-violence that of the weak? Hindu-Muslim tension is to me the acid test. The Congress corruption is a sure sign of violence. *Swaraj* within the States is not to be obtained by any non-violent trick. It will be won, if it is to be won, by non-violence of the strong, *i.e.*, by hard work, patient and mute suffering, service of the poor, the hungry and the forsaken of society, and a voluntary obedience to the laws of the State and society, in so far as they are not repugnant to public and private morals. Unless non-violence of the strong is really developed among us, there should be no thought of civil disobedience for *Swaraj*, whether within the States or in British India. And, as an indispensable test—by no means infallible—of non-violence, I adhere to habitual spinning and habitual use of *Khadi* by the would-be civil resister. The Jaipur *satyagrahis*, if they desire to take part in any civil disobedience struggle that may take place in future, should understand the implications of non-violence and apply themselves with zest to the fulfilment of the minimum conditions I have prescribed. Let them also know that what applies to them applies to all future *satyagraha* that I may have to deal with.

This, however, does not mean that the fight for *Swaraj* stops. It only means that civil disobedience is not to be so cheap as I fear I have indirectly, if not directly, made it. But I am never too old to learn. One is ever young in the felt presence of the God of Truth or Truth which is God. But if civil disobedience is henceforth to be a very dear commodity, I hope, God willing, to show that it will prove to be infinitely more effective and faster moving than the alloy with which we have so far contented ourselves.

## JAIPUR PRISONERS

"*Satyagraha* has been suspended at my instance in Jaipur, as in many other States. It would not remain suspended for ever. I entertain the hope that the States concerned will placate the advanced and awakened section of their people."

The Jaipur Durbar's *Communiqué* on the treatment of Seth Jammalal Bajaj and the other prisoners reads like laboured defence of the *status quo*. The question about Seth Jammalalji is simple. It is admitted that he is locked up in an out-of-the-way place where the water is said to be 'heavy' according to the Indian notion. It is admitted that the place is difficult of access. He has been given no companion. Why this isolation? Is he a dangerous character? Is he an intriguer? One can understand detention as he chose to defy the ban on his entry into his own birth-place.

The authorities know that Sethji is an ideal prisoner. He believes in meticulous observance of jail discipline. It is cruel to isolate him as he has been isolated from the outside world. The greatest want of prisoners is the companionship of their equals in thought, manners and customs. I suggest that without much ado he be transferred to a place which is easily accessible and healthy, and where he is allowed company.

The special pleading with reference to the *satyagrahi* prisoners in Lamba is much worse. They admit that the place selected for their incarceration is an old snake-infested fort. But they point out that in spite of the place being snake-infested, no one has as yet been bitten by reptiles! Must the Jaipur Durbar's conscience wait for snake-bites before it is stirred to action? It should be remembered that these prisoners were transferred to Lamba because they had the presumptuousness to hunger-strike for better treatment. The strike would have continued but for my intervention.

The much larger question of the object of *satyagraha* still remains unsolved. And yet it is not at all large. It is aimed at getting the Praja Sangh recognized. The Durbar have laid down the impossible condition of recognition, *viz.*, that its officials should not be members of any political organization outside the State. Thus, Seth Jamnalalji himself could not remain President of the Sangh because he is connected with the National Congress. *Satyagraha* has been suspended at my instance in Jaipur, as in many other States. It would not remain suspended for ever. I entertain the hope that the States concerned will placate the advanced and awakened section of their people. And I suggest to the Jaipur Durbar that they are going the wrong way by keeping them locked up, even though their *satyagraha* has been suspended. In any case, what I must call the inhuman treatment of the prisoners, including Seth Jamnalalji, might surely stop at once.



## JAIPUR AGAIN

“Civil disobedience was decided upon only to vindicate civil liberty. It was resorted to when even the right of the Praja Mandal to function for the purpose of educating the people in a constitutional manner, to agitate for local responsible government in the State, was questioned.”

Things are moving much too slow in Jaipur. The papers reported that a settlement between the Durbar and the people was imminent and that Seth Jamnalalji and his co-workers would be free. The matters in dispute seem to be incredibly simple. Civil disobedience was decided upon only to vindicate civil liberty. It was resorted to when even the right of the Praja Mandal to function for the purpose of educating the people in a constitutional manner, to agitate for local responsible government in the State, was questioned. Some time ago, a *Communiqué* was issued by the Durbar setting forth the conditions for the recognition of the Praja Mandal. Surely, the Durbar could easily have adjusted the conditions to suit the civil disobedience leaders. Thus, for instance, the condition that ‘no office-holder of the local association shall be also an office-holder of any political association outside the State’ seems to be vexatious. Why should Seth Jamnalalji be disqualified from being President of the Praja Mandal by reason of his being a member of the Working Committee of the National Congress? Or, is the condition specially aimed at him? An explanation is necessary. There are other conditions which, too, require elucidation. The last two are: (1) “That the Association shall undertake to represent aspirations and grievances of the people of the Jaipur State through the proper channels, as they develop from time to time under the constitution established by His Highness the Maharaja Saheb Bahadur, and (2) that membership shall be restricted to persons domiciled in Jaipur State.” Both

are vague. Why should the people not be free to advocate reforms in advance of what the State is prepared to grant? But the meaning of the penultimate condition seems to restrict this natural right. And the term 'domiciled' is a risky legal term of little political use. Why should not the homely word 'resident' be used instead?

## JAIPUR STATE PRAJA MANDAL

“Let us hope that the settlement will lead to cordial relations between the authorities and the Praja Mandal, and that the co-operation will result in progressive betterment of the State in every respect.”

At last, a settlement has been reached between the State and the Praja Mandal in Jaipur. The credit for this happy consummation belongs both to the authorities and Seth Jamnalalji. Let us hope that the settlement will lead to cordial relations between the authorities and the Praja Mandal, and that the co-operation will result in progressive betterment of the people of the State in every respect. For this, the State will have to show toleration and the Mandal restraint in all its doings and utterances.

## JAIPUR

“It is the duty of the Paramount Power to see to it that when it imposes a Minister on a Prince, it gives one who would be sympathetic to public demands. It is time to remove him when he is more autocratic than the Prince in whose name he is supposed to administer the State.”

Seth Jamnalalji is trying to cut his way through a thick forest of difficulties in Jaipur. He had thought that after a settlement, to which he had contributed not a little and which had brought much credit to the State and freedom from embarrassment, he would have fair weather and smooth sailing. But such was not to be the case. In Raja Gyan Nath he has to face a Prime Minister who, according to Sethji, is thoroughly unreliable and reactionary. He has failed to give any satisfaction to the long-suffering *ryots* of Jaipur. He has put back the hands of the clock of progress, and there is an agitation for his removal and the appointment of a Minister who would be responsive to public opinion. It is the duty of the Paramount Power to see to it that when it imposes a Minister on a Prince, it gives one who would be sympathetic to public demands. It is time to remove him when he is more autocratic than the Prince in whose name he is supposed to administer the State.

## JAIPUR SATYAGRAHA

"I have no doubt that an English Dewan is any day a misfit in an Indian State. He has to serve an Indian Chief. But retired English officials, from whom Dewans are chosen, are not by habit used to take orders from Indian Chiefs."

Jaipur *Satyagraha* has ended satisfactorily as announced in Seth Jamnalalji's public statement. He had had several interviews with the Maharaja Saheb. The result has been that the regulation regarding public meetings and processions has been withdrawn. So has the ban on newspapers. Amelioration in several other matters has been assured. For this happy result, both the Maharaja and Seth Jamnalalji deserve to be congratulated—the Maharaja for his just-mindedness, and Sethji for his wisdom and moderation in conducting the negotiations on behalf of the Jaipur Praja Mandal. It is a happy ending to a struggle which was conducted with great restraint and calmness. It is a triumph of non-violence. From the very beginning, the demands were restricted to the barest minimum necessary for self-expression and political education. The goal of responsible government has been always kept in view, but it has never been offensively or aggressively advanced as if the insistence was on an immediate grant of full responsibility. The Praja Mandal has wisely recognized its own limitations and the backward state of the people. Practically, no political education has been hitherto allowed in many of the Rajputana States. It will be solid gain if civil liberty in its real sense is assured to the people of Jaipur. For this, as much will depend upon the wisdom with which it is used by the people, as upon the restraint of the Jaipur authorities.

In this connection, Seth Jamnalalji has raised a most important question. He insists that no European should be appointed Dewan. I have had to perform the painful

duty of criticizing the administration of the State by one of its English Dewans. I have no doubt that an English Dewan is any day a misfit in an Indian State. He has to serve an Indian Chief. But retired English officials, from whom Dewans are chosen, are not by habit used to take orders from Indian Chiefs. They cannot understand the caprices of Indian Princes and will not accommodate themselves to them. The Chiefs themselves never feel at home with English Dewans. Moreover, no matter how conscientious they are, Englishmen can never understand the people of the States or have patience with them. And the people can never take the same liberty with them that they can, and will, with men who are drawn from among themselves. Thus, an English Dewan is a double handicap in an Indian State and robs it of what little scope there is left in it for indigenous development. Add to this the fact that the appointment of English Dewans in States is a cruel encroachment upon the very narrow field left for the expression of Indian administrative talent. Supposing Dewanships had been a preserve of retired English officials, we would have missed Sir T. Madhao Rao or Sir Salar Jung, to mention only two among the well-known Dewans of Indian States.

It is to be hoped, therefore, that if H. H. the Maharaja has really a free choice, he will select an Indian known for his integrity, ability and sympathy for popular aspirations. It is to be hoped further that if the choice has to be made by the British Government, they will not impose a European Dewan on the Maharaja.

## JAIPUR

"Every power is not meant to be immediately used. Garnering it often makes it far more effective than if it is used the moment it is generated."

Those who are interested in Jaipur affairs have been living in suspense, for they had learnt that some talks were taking place between the Prime Minister of the State and Seth Jamnalalji. I regret to have to inform them that nothing worth has come out of the talks. Therefore, the struggle continues. Even civil disobedience continues in a way, though it is suspended in regard to further formation of *jathas* for courting arrest. Those who courted arrests remain in the State prisons. They have not sought release. They will come out in due course on the termination of their sentences. Sethji's detention is indefinite. And he will not come out by undertaking to leave the State on release, and the authorities will not permit him to remain in Jaipur as a free man in spite of the fact that further courting of arrests has stopped. Thus, they will not allow Sethji even to do constructive work among the people. They know that they have no fear of any secret propaganda on his part, or his saying one thing and doing the contrary. His reputation for strictest honesty is too well established to admit of any doubt.

Some complication has arisen because Sethji is suffering from pains in the knees. The State Medical Officer advises Sethji to go to Europe, or at least to the sea-side for treatment. He is himself doing all he can, but he is of opinion that change of place is indicated. Sethji, whilst he is under detention, would not go out of Jaipur even for the sake of getting well. He thinks that self-respect requires unconditional release. He will not think of a change so long as he is under a ban for which he feels there is no justification. Since civil disobedience is sus-

pended, there is no warrant whatsoever for detaining Jamnalalji in custody. Why won't the authorities release him and arrest him when he commits an offence against the laws of the State? To say the least, there is something uncanny about the treatment of Seth Jamnalalji. It is the duty of the Jaipur authorities either to justify the indefinite detention or to release him unconditionally.

The Jaipurians have been asking me how long the embargo on their civil resistance will last. I can only answer, as long as the atmosphere demands suspension. Meanwhile, let them carry out the constructive programme. I retain the opinion that no one is fit for offering civil disobedience who has not satisfied the conditions I have laid down. And, there is always a saving clause about all my advice. No one need follow it unless it appeals to his head and heart. No one, who has honestly the inner call, need be deterred from obeying it because of my advice. In other words, it applies only to those who are not conscious of any inner call, and who have faith in my ripper experience and soundness of my judgment.

Though the talks have broken down, the authorities are not absolved from the duty of finding a solution for the *impasse*. Absence of civil disobedience does not mean cessation of agitation, in some form or other, for securing the rudiments of freedom for which the fight was undertaken. Public opinion will give the authorities no rest. Let the Jaipurians, therefore, know that so long as they have the will, they have the power. And it increases with every effort to keep it under check. Every power is not meant to be immediately used. Garnering it often makes it far more effective than if it is used the moment it is generated.



## TRAVANCORE REPRESSION—I

"I have no doubt whatsoever that the case for responsible government will be strengthened by the frightfulness being committed by the Government of Travancore, if only the people will not be demoralized and will continue to adhere to non-violence."

*Gandhiji issued the following statement to the Press on Sept. 3, 1938 :*

I have been in close touch with the prime movers affected by the tragedy which is now being enacted in Travancore, and I had hoped that I should be able to avoid having to make any public statement. After a study of the available evidence and interviews with representative men from Travancore, I have come to the conclusion that the Travancore Government are resorting to repressive methods far in excess of the requirements, if there are any.

The Travancore Government contend that the Travancore State Congress activities are disloyal and subversive. I have studied the documents alleged to contain evidence in support of such a charge, and have failed to find anything of that nature. On the contrary, I have seen emphatic repudiation by the State Congress of the charge, unless constitutional agitation for responsible government is to be called subversive.

I have, however, read the memorial of the Working Committee of the Travancore State Congress, making the most serious charges, unsupported by any evidence, against the able Dewan, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar. They should never have been made, even if the memorialists had evidence in support. Such evidence is irrelevant to the case for responsible government. It would have its place in a memorial for the removal of the Dewan. There is no doubt that these charges have harmed the memorialists and, therefore, the State Congress, though they

cannot weaken the case for responsible government. I have no doubt whatsoever that the case for responsible government will be strengthened by the frightfulness being committed by the Government of Travancore, if only the people will not be demoralized and will continue to adhere to non-violence. If reports about violence by students are true, I appeal to the students to desist and allow the movement to develop non-violently. Leaders who have been locked up should make amends by withdrawing the charges against the Dewan.

I had the honour of meeting the young Maharaja and the Maharani. I have had the privilege of knowing Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar for many years. I appeal to them to retrace their steps and allow the State Congress to function so long as its activities remain peaceful. Surely, the common law of the State is enough to cope with individuals using violent language or resorting to actual violence. But, at this hour of the day, to expect the people to submit to the suppression of free speech or of demands, however advanced these may be, is to invite trouble.

In my humble opinion, the prevention of Shrimati Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya from entering the State was a first class tactical blunder. It passes comprehension how Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, himself a foreigner, prohibited the entry of a distinguished Indian lady on the ground, according to him, of her being an outsider. She was amenable to the State law if she had committed any breach thereof. I thought it was only reserved for the English administrators to treat Indians going from one province to another as foreigners. It ill becomes the Indian Princes and their advisers to follow the pernicious practice of the English administrators—a practice of which many Englishmen are heartily ashamed. The Government may, by the terrible repression they have resorted to, succeed in killing the movement for the time being, but it will never die and will leave a bitter memory behind. I hope that wiser counsels will yet prevail and the State Congress will be permitted to function properly.

## TRAVANCORE REPRESSION—II

“Not even the massacre of Jallianwalla was justified exactly as the Travancore shootings are now being justified. Was not General Dyer’s action subsequently condemned? So is it likely to be in this case.”

*Gandhiji issued on Sept. 6, 1938 the following rejoinder in reply to the statement of the Dewan of Travancore :*

I have read the Travancore Dewan’s statement with the attention it deserves. I fear I cannot take shelter under ignorance of the Press messages published from time to time on the tragedy that is being continued in Travancore. Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar’s defence reads like an edition of the reports that used to be issued on behalf of the British Government during the civil disobedience campaign. Not even the massacre of Jallianwalla was justified exactly as the Travancore shootings are now being justified. Was not General Dyer’s action subsequently condemned? So is it likely to be in this case.

I ask Sir C. P. Ramaswami to copy Sir Mirza Ismail and appoint an outsider of unimpeachable integrity to enquire into the whole affair. Let him declare a general amnesty and allow free expression of opinion. Instead of importing the military and a special officer to carry on repression, I invite the Travancore Government to request some one like the Rt. Hon’ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, if Congressmen are anathema, to go to Travancore and help them to re-establish peace there without further military action.

## TRAVANCORE FRIGHTFULNESS

“If a wrong-doer banks upon the *ahimsa* of his victim and goes on heaping wrong upon wrong till every one of the victims is crushed, a cry from the surrounding atmosphere arises and the force of public opinion or the like overtakes the wrong-doer.”

I have said enough of the Travancore frightfulness. I can call it by no other name. Here is an extract from a letter from a Travancorean, whose testimony I have never had occasion to doubt. He says :

“A careful study of the Dewan’s statement shows that he is trying to cloud the issue and mislead outsiders who are not aware of the sequence of events that he narrates. Excepting the threats of ‘civil war’ alleged by the Dewan, all the other events or occurrences happened subsequent to the promulgation of the proclamation and the declaration of the State Congress as an illegal body. How post-war occurrences justify the war itself, it is difficult to understand.

“As regards the violence, which we all deplore, the stone-throwing and the burning of buses are attributed to rowdies set up by the police according to one version; but without a thorough inquiry, which is impossible under the present circumstances, it is difficult to say what is the truth. Anyhow, do you not think that it is rather surprising that though all these occurrences took place in clear day-light and at meetings at which large numbers of police and military forces were present, it was not possible to prevent any of them or arrest a single one of the offenders? The explanation of the supporters of the State Congress is, that the police dare not arrest any as they and their hirelings commit these atrocities. I cannot say how far the explanation can be accepted. A volunteer, who was subjected to a severe *lathi* charge at the Quilon meeting, says in an interview to *The Hindu* correspondent (published in *The Hindu* of 4th Sept.) that he saw with his own eyes some policemen throwing stones. Such allegations are generally made by the State Congress members. Meetings are being held and speeches made in all parts of the country, but the arrests are very few. The present policy seems to be to disperse meetings by force. This leads to firing and death of innocent persons. After the Quilon meeting, there was

firing again at Puthupally, a village about five miles away from Kottayam. One or two died and some were wounded. The actual number is not yet known. All the provisions of the new Regulation are being openly disobeyed by the people. But the Government are not able to bring the offenders to book as there is only one jail in the State and that is already full. If the Government desire to arrest and punish all the offenders, then they will have to build more jails as the number willing to court arrest and imprisonment is very large already and is increasing day after day."

And, I am inundated with telegrams describing the fearful repression going on in several parts of Travancore. I do not ask that this testimony should be believed as against the State *Communiqués*. But I do suggest that there are, as usual, two sides to the question and that there is a strong case for an impartial inquiry.

But whether there is an inquiry or not, the duty of the Travancore State Congress is clear—on the one hand, to see that there is no violence of any sort done by them or their sympathizers, and on the other, to go on with their programme of direct action till the Travancore Government relent or the last member is accounted for.

I should like here to state one limitation of *ahimsa*. If a wrong-doer banks upon the *ahimsa* of his victim, and goes on heaping wrong upon wrong till every one of the victims is crushed, a cry from the surrounding atmosphere arises and the force of public opinion or the like overtakes the wrong-doer. But no *satyagrahi* should think that he has never to suffer unto death. His victory lies in the defiance, by his unconquerable spirit, of death and loss of property. The wrong-doer's certain defeat lies in his utter failure to bend or break the spirit of his victim.

If the States persist in their obstinacy and hug their ignorance of the awakening that has taken place throughout India, they are courting certain destruction. I claim to be a friend of the States. Their service has been an heirloom in my family for the past three generations, if not longer. I am no blind worshipper of antiquity. But I am not ashamed of the heirloom. All the States may not live. The biggest ones can live only if they will recognize their limitations, become servants of their peo-

ple, trustees of their welfare, and depend for their existence not on arms, whether their own or British, but solely on the good-will of their people. Frightfulness will feed the fire of violence that one feels smouldering everywhere. If the States are badly advised and they rely upon organized violence for resisting the just demands of their people, *ahimsa*, so far generated in the country as a means of redressing social injustice, will not protect them. If it had grown into a Himalayan oak, it would have passed any test however severe. But, sad to confess, it has not gone deep enough into the Indian soil.

## THE TRAVANCORE SITUATION

“*Satyagraha* demands extraordinary caution, even to the extent of suspension of civil-disobedience, if the resisters have not full control over forces of violence.”

Correspondents have been writing and wiring to me about the events in Travancore. Shri Changanacheri K. Parameshwaran Pillai has been specially to see me and acquaint me with the situation. He has erred in giving his version of my talk with him.<sup>1</sup> Whilst the situation remains delicate, every word has to be weighed before it is uttered. Shri Pillai was clear that mob violence in the shape of stone-throwing had occurred. He, however, made it perfectly clear that the State Congress people had no part in it and that it was contrary to their wish. I have wires denying mob violence and definitely saying that violence was instigated by *agents provocateurs*. I am unable to decide between the two opposite versions. But I can say this that *satyagraha* demands extraordinary caution, even to the extent of suspension of civil disobedience, if the resisters have not full control over forces of violence.

<sup>1</sup> *A Correction*—Shri Changanacheri K. Parameshwaran Pillai writes saying that he never made any statement to the Press, nor permitted anybody to make any on the interview he had with me. When he saw the line in my statement that he had erred in giving his version of the interview, he at once issued a full contradiction. Of course, I accept his repudiation without the slightest hesitation. Indeed, when correspondents protested, I was pained that such a cautious and correct man like Shri K. P. Pillai could ever allow himself to be so imprudent as to publish anything about the interview without reference to me. I was inclined to refer to him before writing the line I did, but time was of the essence. I am, therefore, glad to make this correction and express my regret that I did an injustice, though quite unconsciously, to a faithful co-worker like Shri K. P. Pillai by attributing to him what he never said—*Harijan*: Oct. 22, 1938.

What exactly should be done, I cannot advise from this distance. The responsibility for right decision must be shouldered by local leaders. In coming to their decision, they will remember that any the slightest deviation from truth and non-violence, whether in themselves or by connivance in others, is bound to affect the movement adversely.

As to the charges against the Dewan, I telegraphed the imprisoned leaders who were responsible for making them. This is their reply :

“Your kind telegram advising withdrawal of the State Congress memorandum. We consulted T. M. Verghese and others. The Working Committee feels satisfied that the Dewan’s continuance in office is detrimental to the people’s interests. The withdrawal of the memorandum may unmeritedly discredit the State Congress and cause an irretrievable set-back to the movement. Pray for support and guidance.”

I appreciate the spirit behind the reply. The leaders would be lowered in my estimation if, for the sake of purchasing their liberty, they withdrew the charges. But if the conviction has gone home that in a demand for responsible government such charges could have only a subordinate place, if any at all, and if they saw with me that persistence in them, especially without the ability to prove them, can but seriously harm the movement, it is their clear duty to withdraw the charges and thus free the movement of the initial blunder and handicap. There is no discredit greater than the refusal to acknowledge errors.

I have wires alleging tortures by the authorities. It is hard to believe them. I hope they are baseless; and if isolated cases have happened, I should hope that the Travancore Government will prevent any future recurrence.

I observe that the movement promises to be protracted, if only because of violence whether spontaneous, though unconnected with the Congress, or engineered as alleged. I can only entertain the hope that the authorities will relent and magnanimously allow the movement to run its course without the ban which I consider to be wholly unnecessary. A movement, in itself wholly



noble, which claims cultured men and women as willing and enthusiastic sufferers, should be fostered. It can never be crushed.

## TO TRAVANCORE STUDENTS

“Obstruction, rowdyism and the like are naked violence. I am credited with influence over students. If I have any, I would ask them to observe non-violence in thought, word and deed.”

I have two letters from schoolmasters, besides others from laymen, complaining of students' rowdyism in Travancore. The Principal of C.M.S. College, Kottayam, says that the students blocked the passage of those who wanted to attend the classes. They twice turned away girls who did not listen to them. They rushed at the classes and made noises, making classes impossible.

This violent participation by students in a struggle which its authors claim to be absolutely non-violent, makes progress difficult, if not impossible. So far as I know, the leaders of the movement do not want the students, even if they wish to participate, to depart in any way from the non-violent way. Obstruction, rowdyism and the like are naked violence. I am credited with influence over students. If I have any, I would ask them to observe non-violence in thought, word and deed. If, however, the forces of violence cannot be controlled by those who are in charge of the movement, it may be a question for them whether, in the interest of the movement itself, it is not wise to suspend civil disobedience.

I must not presume to lay down the law from this distance,<sup>1</sup> but I do feel from the evidence before me that the leaders would incur grave risk if they allowed students to think that their violence would help the movement, or that it is secretly liked by the leaders.

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji was at the time at Mardan (N. W. F. P.).

## THE TRAVANCORE AMNESTY

“It is to be hoped that, in order to make the amnesty fruitful and peace permanent, it will be followed up by the appointment of a committee of inquiry into past events, and another into the nature of responsible government to be granted under the aegis of the Maharaja.”

I tender my congratulations to His Highness, Her Highness and the Dewan for the general amnesty granted to civil disobedience prisoners in Travancore on the Maharaja's birth-day. It is to be hoped that, in order to make the amnesty fruitful and peace permanent, it will be followed up by the appointment of a committee of inquiry into past events, and another into the nature of responsible government to be granted under the aegis of the Maharaja.

There remain still allegations against the Dewan. I would repeat my suggestion for withdrawal. Withdrawal need not mean disbelief in their truth by the authors. They should withdraw in the higher interest. The case for responsible government must not be mixed up with the allegations which pale into insignificance compared to the question of the transference of power into the hands of the people.

## ADVICE TO TRAVANCORE STATE CONGRESS

“An instrument of permanent value is a constructive programme. The employment of civil disobedience has well-defined limitations and requires suspension as the occasion demands.”

Having obtained the permission of the President of the Travancore State Congress, I am now able to tell the public what advice I gave the deputation that saw me on November 13 and 14. I told them that their cause would be damaged by persistence in the charges against the Dewan, and that the question was not one of the truth or otherwise of the charges. It was one of political insight. Allegations were made that the struggle was personal. The demand for responsible government made it impersonal and raised it to a high level. I could not be a party to the conduct of a struggle which must engage and exhaust time and energy in pursuit of a personal matter to the exclusion of the most important one of *Swaraj*. If they concentrated on the allegations, responsible government was bound to recede into the background.

Though my conviction about the correctness of my advice was unshaken, the members were to be guided by their own, if it conflicted with mine, for the burden of conducting the struggle rested on them. I also told them that if violence continued, no matter how it occurred, they were bound to suspend civil disobedience; for violence on the part of the public, even though instigated, showed that the State Congress influence was not adequate. This in no way meant suspension of the struggle. It meant merely a change of the emphasis on the instruments. An instrument of permanent value was a constructive programme. The employment of civil disobedience had well-defined limitations and required suspension as the occasion demanded.

## TRAVANCORE

"I claim to be and have always been above partisanship. I know no distinction between Christians and non-Christians in terms of politics. I do in terms of religion, and then, too, I hold the Christian religion and the other religions in the same respect as my own."

A Travancore Christian friend writes :

"There is a great misunderstanding about you among the Christian circles of Travancore, that you are absolutely against the interests of Christians, and this has originated since you have begun to insist on the withdrawal of the memorial to the Maharaja. The trend of public opinion, as has been expressed to me by many friends, is something like this:

"By the influence of the Travancore Maharani and Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, you are wrongly made to understand that the present movement in Travancore is only a rising of the Christians for absolute supremacy over the Hindus of Travancore. It is with this impression in the background of your mind that you are to-day working against the Travancore movement. Besides, due to the famous temple entry proclamation, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar has done a great service to the Hindu community as a whole, and, therefore, you want to save him from any blemish and personal charges, whatever be his shortcomings. It is with this end in view, that you are so strongly pressing the State Congress to withdraw the memorial. Otherwise, there is no reason why you should adopt one policy for Rajkot and another for Travancore. For, in the case of Rajkot, Vallabhbhai Patel and many others have made so many personal charges against the Dewan, and recently Vallabhbhai even threatened to start another fight for the removal of the present Dewan, and you simply approve of all this. While in the case of Travancore, even though it is absolutely impossible for you to understand the situation on the spot, being so far off, you simply dictate terms on the memorial questions and keep mum over all the unjust actions of the Government. Even after the memorial has been withdrawn, the leaders are kept in prison and arrests are being continued in large numbers, and people are terrorized all over the State, even though the movement is almost dead. All this you view in silence, without uttering a word. This is a further evidence of your partiality in siding with the Travancore Government."

Similar communications, more strongly worded, have also been received by me. It might clear the atmosphere a little if I answer the charges. My conscience is quite clear. I claim that in no other State movement have I taken so much interest as in the Travancore movement, for the simple reason that I was pressed to do so by Shri G. Ramachandran who belongs to the Sabarmati *Asbrama* and in whose wisdom, courage, sincerity and non-violence I have very great faith. He threw himself into the struggle after receiving my consent. He had told me that there were all sections interested in the struggle. It was at his instance that I requested Shrimati Rajkumari Amrit Kaur to go to Travancore and do what was possible by way of negotiation.

I have been against the mixing up of the struggle for responsible government with the charges against the Dewan. But I have been equally insistent that the leaders need not withdraw them unless they realized the soundness of my advice, for they had to bear the brunt of public opposition, if there was any. They could not do so, unless they could speak with conviction. I told them, too, that they would be justified in prosecuting the charges, if they made the dismissal the only issue, as they well might. But if they insisted on responsible government, there was no meaning in proceeding with the charges. It would divide the country's attention, and, in the event of prosecution, their time and resources would be employed in proving the charges. Whereas, if they got responsible government, which they were bound to, if they were united and strong in their faith in non-violence and truth, they would have control over all the Dewans, present and future. The charges have been withdrawn, therefore, only because the leaders, as I see from the acting President's statement just received by me, were fully convinced of the advisability of withdrawing the charges.

The comparison with Rajkot is ignorant. I never guided the movement there. There was no occasion for my guidance. The Sardar was in no need of it. If he needed it, it was always at his disposal. There was

no question there of dismissal of the Dewan. The Sardar resolutely refused to have anything to do with the charges, if the fight was to be for responsible government. Of course, all sorts of people who opposed the struggle came under his lash, but that was wholly different from making dismissal of an official a plank in the struggle.

And, my guidance in the Travancore struggle has never been lacking. But the critics should understand that I am not conducting the struggle. I advise when I am referred to. Nor need all my advice and all my work be before the public gaze. Much of my work is behind the curtain. It is not, therefore, secret. I have nothing to hide. But many things need to be done silently, even secretly (in the right sense of the word), in the interest of the cause.

Lastly, let my critics understand that I am not interested in the present Dewan retaining his office. If I have been in correspondence with the Dewan, it has been only for the sake of the cause, pleading for justice. And as for the Maharani, I have never been in correspondence with Her Highness throughout the struggle. I claim to be and have always been above partisanship. I know no distinction between Christians and non-Christians in terms of politics. I do in terms of religion, and then, too, I hold the Christian religion and the other religions in the same respect as my own.

## WHY THE WITHDRAWAL

“Apparently, there may be no connection between constructive work and non-violence; but there is an internal logic connecting the two, when constructive work is taken up as a part of a non-violence programme.”

*The following is the substance of the talk Gandhiji gave to the deputationists that waited on him on Nov. 15, 1938 at Segaoon in connection with his advice to the Travancore State Congress to withdraw the personal allegations against the Dewan and to suspend the civil disobedience movement for the time being :*

I have received reports that there has been violence on a considerable scale in Travancore. On the other hand, I have received wires from the State Congress dictators saying that there has been no violence whatever for which they can be held responsible, that whatever violence there has been was instigated by the authorities. It has been alleged, too, that there has been secret endorsement of violence by the State Congress people, though they are not directly responsible for it. What I say is that if there has been mob violence, by whomsoever wrought, it shows that the State Congress has not acquired sufficient control over the masses. In that case, civil disobedience has to be suspended, even as was done by me more than once. I admit, you were behind the prison bars when most of the alleged cases of violence took place. I appreciate also the fact that you did not get a chance of educating the masses into discipline. I entirely endorse your view that the fight should not be merely to wrest a few concessions from the authorities, but for establishing real responsible government. But all that, to my mind, makes out a case for doing more spade-work among the masses. You must build from below.

You tell me that you regard the removal of the De-



wan would help your movement as he is the chief obstacle in your way. If you persist in the charges, you must be prepared to prove them. But, in my opinion, it will have the inevitable result of pushing the question of responsible government into the background by bringing to the fore a purely personal issue. I call that playing the enemy's game. And you would give the wrong lead to the people. I do not want you to withdraw the allegations because they are not true, if you believe in them. I want those allegations to be withdrawn, because you have a far bigger issue at stake. The greater includes the less. Removal of the Dewan by itself would not give you responsible government. A clever Dewan might choose to slip out and remain in the background till the storm has blown over and, in the meantime, use a substitute to crush the movement. Such things have happened before and will happen again. On the other hand, responsible government includes the power to dismiss ministers according to the popular will. You can, therefore, say, without abating an iota from your charges, that you do not want to dissipate your energy by pursuing these charges. There are the two alternatives before you, both of them perfectly legitimate. You have to make your choice. You should know best the psychology of your people. It may be such that the fight can be best conducted through the agitation to remove the Dewan. Personally, when I weigh the *pros* and *cons* of the matter, I feel like saying you should swallow the bitter cup and concentrate on getting the reins of power into your hands.

But whatever the decision about the allegations, I would advise you not to restart civil disobedience just now. You should put your own house in order. If you keep unadulterated non-violence at the back of your minds, you would not say: 'Let us take time by the forelock, and now that there is all this energy bubbling forth, let us consolidate our gains.' You would not capture power by madly frittering away the energy generated. That way lies danger. You will, if you follow that, only pave the way for the political schemers who may exploit

the situation for furthering their own designs. I would, therefore, ask you to go slow, steadily gathering all the threads into your hands. You should become a homogeneous and disciplined mass by undergoing training in constructive work and non-violence. You may not take another forward step without canvassing public opinion inside and outside Travancore first.

Apparently, there may be no connection between constructive work and non-violence; but there is an internal logic connecting the two, when constructive work is taken up as a part of a non-violence programme. The National Flag, for instance, was conceived as a symbol of unity, purity and non-violence. It is the place that we have given it in our non-violence programme that gives it its significance and importance; by itself, it has no virtue. In prosecuting your constructive programme, you must always keep the background of non-violence before your mind.

Then, I should ask students to remain apart from the civil disobedience part of the struggle, and should not carry on any propaganda in their midst. It is not proper to ask students of school-going age to do such work. It is a sign of weakness. It is like asking children to undergo suffering for their parents.

But the students can and ought to take part in the struggle by becoming adepts in *Charaka* and other items in the constructive programme, as the Chinese students are doing while the fight against Japan is going on. The Chinese students are working to preserve the essentials of Chinese culture through their programme of New Education. They are helping to create a national spirit, which will remain unsubdued irrespective of the fortunes of the Chinese arms on the battle-field.

The *Satyagraha* struggle in British India had two aspects, non-violent non-co-operation with the Government and co-operation among the people themselves. Both these aspects should constantly be kept before the mind's eye. The constructive programme that I have set before you necessitates perfect co-operation among all the sections. You will, therefore, go among the Pulayats

and the Pariahs, fraternize with them and appeal to them as fellow-countrymen and equals to come out and take their due share in the sacred fight along with the Brahmins, Ezhwas, Christians and others. You must all become one. You dare not leave out or antagonize a single section or community without stultifying yourselves and damaging your fight.

Then, there is the prohibition work. You would not picket just now, but you would visit the drunkards in their homes and strive with them. Even if you do not succeed in producing immediate tangible results, it will put your struggle on a moral plane and add strength and momentum to it.

Travancore people, both men and women, are so simple in their habits. They wear white and need very little cloth to protect them against the elements. They can easily produce all the *Khadi* they need. Travancore need not import a single yard of cloth or even *Khadi* from outside. This means that there should be a spinning-wheel in every home.

And *Khadi* should be linked with liberty. All the time you are spinning, you would think not in terms of your own requirements, but in terms of the requirements of the nation. You will say: 'I want to clothe the whole nation that is naked and I must do it non-violently.' Each time you draw a thread, say to yourselves: "We are drawing the thread of *Swaraj*." Multiply this picture million-fold, and you have freedom knocking at your doors.

## TRAVANCORE

"It is surely late in the day to talk of Hindu States and Muslim States. And what is the test? Is Kashmir a Hindu State because a Hindu Prince happens to rule a territory which has an overwhelming majority of Muslims as its inhabitants? Or, is Hyderabad with its overwhelming Hindu population a Muslim State, because a Muslim Prince rules their destiny? I regard this kind of talk as a libel on nationalism."

Though I have been apparently silent about Travancore, the workers may rest assured that I have not been neglectful. Sometimes, silence is more telling than speech. All I am free to say is that I have been usefully silent. I am sorry that all has not gone well. I had hoped that when the State Congress withdrew the allegations against the Dewan, things would run smooth and the movement for responsible government would be allowed full play. But the bulletin, reproduced elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> shows that there is no such luck for the Travancoreans. The unseating of 19 prominent members of the Travancore Assembly seems to be vindictive. Have they done anything dishonourable? Not that I know of.

I have before me a letter describing the ill-treatment of Shrimati Akkamma Cherian, a political prisoner. If what she declared in court is true, her treatment was surely disgraceful. She is a cultured woman. She gave up the headmistress-ship of a school in order to join the struggle for liberty. It hurts one to think that in an advanced State like Travancore, which boasts an enlightened Prince, an equally enlightened Maharani, his mother, and an experienced Dewan, liberty is being choked by rude repression.

But another letter tells me that this repression is tak-

<sup>1</sup> Omitted.

ing place in the name of Hinduism and for the sake of saving a Hindu State ! It has been suggested that the idea is to repress the Christians who are playing a prominent part in the struggle for freedom.

It is surely late in the day to talk of Hindu States and Muslim States. And what is the test ? Is Kashmir a Hindu State because a Hindu Prince happens to rule a territory which has an over-whelming majority of Muslims as its inhabitants ? Or, is Hyderabad with its over-whelming Hindu population a Muslim State because a Muslim Prince rules their destiny ? I regard this kind of talk as a libel on nationalism. Is India a Christian State because a Christian king rules over her destiny ? But if India is Indian, no matter who rules, the States are also Indian, no matter who happens to be the ruler. And the present Rulers and their successors will rule only by the grace of an awakened people. The awakening that has taken place has come to stay. Every day quickens the pace. The Rulers and their advisers may succeed for the time being in suppressing the spirit of the people. They will never succeed in killing it. To succeed would be to kill the spirit of the people of India. Is any one in India so short-sighted as to feel that Independence is not coming soon ? And is it possible to conceive that an Independent India will for one moment tolerate repression in any single spot, be it ever so big or ever so small ? There is room, in my conception of an Independent India, for States with Princes as constitutional trustees, as in Aundh.<sup>1</sup> There is room for Englishmen as fellow-servants of the people, never as masters. Therefore, the only way in which the Princes can live in a free India is for them now to recognize the time spirit, bow to it and act accordingly. Let it be the boast of the Hindu Prince, his Hindu mother and their Hindu Dewan that they were not afraid of their Christian citizens. Supposing there was responsible government in Travancore, what could the Christians or the Hindus or the Muslims do ? Whoever the legislators, they will be responsible to the voters. There is no

<sup>1</sup> See *Aundh Reforms*—p. 378

room for fear, there is no hitch in the process. But in the present repression, there is much to fear and there are many hitches.

## TRAVANCORE AGAIN

*"Satyagraha, if it is the greatest force in the world, requires also the capacity for the greatest suffering with a heart without anger or malice. Whilst it is right to publish the news about the doings of the oppressor, there must be infinite patience for endless suffering and yet a burning faith in the ultimate success of truth."*

I take the following from Shri Ramachandran's letter to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur :

"I know there is nothing we can expect unless we burn ourselves out peacefully and truthfully for the cause for which we stand. You must have seen how at the last meeting of the Working Committee of the State Congress, we laid down a time-limit of six weeks before commencing a programme of civil resistance. God is witness that we are anxious for peace. But there has been no enquiry into shootings which took place in nine places. Many lawyers convicted during the last campaign have been debarred from practising for two years. 19 members of the State Congress party in the Legislature have been disqualified just on the eve of the present session now sitting. Government had ample time to notify disqualification earlier and order re-elections in time. Now 19 constituencies remain unrepresented. Fines have not been refunded. Confiscated property has not been returned. Cancellation of newspaper licences remains intact. One would have thought that the birth-day amnesty would include all these. Instead, a systematic attempt has been made to destroy the State Congress volunteer organization under another iniquitous regulation brought into force for that specific purpose. Just now, there are over 200 political prisoners. Many respectable people have been arrested under section 90 meant for security proceedings against *goondas*. Fresh accommodation has been added in the central jail. Over 1,000 special police have been recruited from among bad elements at the astounding monthly salary of Rs. 5. Can anything beat that? And as though the Travancore police cannot be trusted to do the dirty work, numerous police constables have been recruited from outside Travancore. The Government's policy of repression has gone on unabated, without fuss and without precipitating a frontal battle. That is why we feel compelled to lay down a time-limit of six weeks. I wish you

to study carefully the papers I have sent to Bapu—specially, the two resolutions we passed at the last meeting of the Working Committee. I am oppressed with the idea that Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar's policy will create a gulf between the Ruler and the people."

I have refrained from giving in these columns the resolutions and the preface referred to in the letter. It is well for the reader to have these before him to enable him to judge what the State Congress is doing. They will be found elsewhere in this issue.<sup>1</sup>

The documents make painful reading. What has happened since the amnesty has robbed it of the grace that should accompany generous amnesties, as this one on the birth-day of the Maharaja was claimed to be. It was a spontaneous gesture. After-events seem to suggest that it was no gesture of generosity, but that it was a part of the tactics adopted by the authorities to allay the agitation that was rising against the Travancore Durbar and to divide the people in Travancore. If the information given by Shri Ramachandran is correct, the second object has not been gained and the first was partly achieved. For, the Indian Press was inclined to believe, after the release of prisoners, that the fight was over.

I would love to think that there was no sinister motive behind the partial amnesty. If so, it seems to me to be quite easy to conciliate the State Congress, unless crushing, not conciliation, is the aim of the authorities. Let the amnesty be completed and a Reforms Committee be appointed in consultation with the State Congress, and peace between the Prince and the people is assured.

But there may be no such good fortune either for the people or the Prince. In that case, the State Congressmen should remember that *satyagraha*, if it is the greatest force in the world, requires also the capacity for the greatest suffering with a heart without anger or malice. Whilst it is right to publish the news about the doings of the oppressor, there must be infinite patience for endless suffering and yet a burning faith in the ultimate

<sup>1</sup> Omitted.



success of truth.

It is well that the Congress has fixed upon a six weeks' limit. But if it is found that six weeks are not enough for ensuring non-violence, as far as it is humanly possible, and for also ensuring continuity of constructive work, there would be no shame but additional credit in taking further postponement. If thoughtless persons and unkind critics regard such postponement as a sign of weakness, the fighters need not mind such imputations. After all, the soldier knows when to stay his hand and when to move on. He knows that often there is action in so-called inaction, and imprudent action is worse than real inaction. And weak is not he who is so called, but he who feels that he is weak. Let the members of the Working Committee realize that the technique of non-violent action requires general and effective control over forces of violence, no matter how or by whom instigated. If and when the struggle is resumed, I hope that, in answer to my wires, I will not be told that the State Congress is not responsible for violence if it breaks out. Does not responsible government mean that the people, instead of a dictator appointed by a Paramount Power, are responsible for all the acts of the people? Let them realize that if violence breaks out on any appreciable scale, it might, very probably, will be a call for another suspension, even as there was suspension in Bardoli, though violence broke out in far-off Chauri Chaura.

## TRAVANCORE

“The first indispensable condition precedent to any civil resistance is that there should be surety against any outbreak of violence, whether on the part of those who are identified with civil resistance or on the part of the general public.”

*Shown the report about the Travancore State Congress having resolved on reviving civil resistance on March 25, Gandhiji remarked :*

Having been out of touch with everything since my leaving Segaon, that is nearly a fortnight, I do not feel competent to give decisive opinion upon the pending resumption of civil resistance in Travancore. But I have no difficulty in stating certain general principles. The first indispensable condition precedent to any civil resistance is that there should be surety against any outbreak of violence, whether on the part of those who are identified with civil resistance or on the part of the general public. It would be no answer, in the case of an outbreak of violence, that it was instigated by the State or other agencies hostile to civil resisters. It should be obvious that civil resistance cannot flourish in an atmosphere of violence. This does not mean that the resources of a *satyagrahi* have come to an end. Ways other than civil disobedience should be found out. The second condition is that disobedience should not be destructive, *i.e.*, harmful to the country. The laws to be picked up, therefore, should be those which are harmful to the people, or laws whose breach will not harm the people but are likely merely to make more work for the authorities. Thirdly, it must be a movement in which the largest number of people can take part. Fourthly, students should not be invited or allowed to take part in civil resistance. There should be no secrecy. Civil resisters must conform to the minimum requirements that may be laid down for the

sake of discipline or otherwise.

*Asked why he asked students to come out of colleges and schools in 1921 and participate in Non-co-operation, and why he was opposed to students' participation in the movement now, Gandhiji explained that the position then was different. He asked students to empty colleges etc., by way of non-co-operation. The moment a student comes out of college, he becomes a citizen when he is free to participate in the movement. He would have no quarrel if students leave colleges altogether and participate in the movement.*

## READ THE SIGNS

"I ask the Princes and their advisers to read the signs of the times and march with them. They may succeed by frightful measures in sending for a time the freedom movement underground, but they will never be able to crush it altogether."

I observe that Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar had no better use for the two Travancore stalwarts, Shri Thanu Pillai and Shri Ramachandran, than to send them to prison. They will give a good account of themselves in prison, as they have done outside. But I cannot congratulate the Travancore Durbar on their action.

When I was in Rajkot, I had seen Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar's statement in condemnation of what he was pleased to term outside interference. May the Princes summon whatever outside assistance they may choose, and not the people? There is no restriction on the outside help the Princes may take. The popular party has put many voluntary restrictions on such help. After all, what am I doing except to give advice as an expert in the science of *satyagraha*? By doing so, I promote the spirit of non-violence and the cause of peace. The connection between the people of the States and of the so-called British India is organic, vital and indissoluble. There is no such connection between the Princes, who are and who pride themselves on being independent of one another. The common tie between them is that of subservience to the Paramount Power, without whose permission, implied or explicit, they cannot move a blade of grass.

But the Paramount Power itself growingly lives on the will of the nation, including the people of the States. If the nation realizes that it can develop invincible strength through truth and non-violence, the Paramount Power will be voluntarily replaced by the power of the people.

It, therefore, seems to me that Sir C. P. Ramaswami and those Dewans, who think like him, are bad advisers of their Princes and ill serve them. The effort to ignore the Congress and Congress workers and to prevent its natural influence working in the States, is like that of a child who by the little palm of his right hand tries to stop an onrushing flood. This attempt to stifle the legitimate aspirations of the people of the States, surely sows seeds of bitterness on the one hand between the people of the States and their Princes to whom they want to be loyal, and on the other, between the Princes and the Congress which wants to help them if it is allowed to do so.

I ask the Princes and their advisers to read the signs of the times and march with them. They may succeed by frightful measures in sending for a time the freedom movement under-ground, but they will never be able to crush it altogether. I venture to think also that the Paramount Power will have to shed their nervousness and over-cautiousness. If they owe a duty to the Princes, surely they owe an equal duty to their people. The days when the people could be ignored are gone.

If the Princes will not listen, let the Paramount Power tell them in plain terms that they may not expect the latter's assistance in suppressing their people. The Paramount Power, who draw Ministers in many Provinces from the Congress, may not sit still when neighbouring States heap insults upon the Congress. It is an anomaly that demands quick handling.

To the people of Travancore, I suggest that the cause has benefited by the premature arrests of the two stalwarts. The benefit can only accrue if they will use the arrests wisely. If there is the slightest risk of violence breaking out, let there be no demonstration by way of processions and the like. Let them all devote themselves to constructive work. The date of launching out upon civil disobedience must not be anticipated. If I am to continue to advise, let me study the situation and let them await my opinion before resuming civil disobedience. Civil disobedience is but a minor part of *satyagraha*. Let the people, including the most illiterate and the down-

trodden, be knit in a common bond by silent service. In this work, even the students can take their due share. Let the *satyagrahis* remember that haste is waste. Their freedom was assured when they took the solemn vow of fighting for it through truth and non-violence, that is, through enlightened and disciplined self-suffering. For, I know that they will never go back upon their vow.

## SUSPEND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

“A *satyagrahi* is indifferent whether it is civil disobedience or some other phase of the struggle to which he is called. Nor does he mind if, in the middle of the civil disobedience march, he is called upon to halt and do something else. He must have faith that it is all for the best.”

I have had long chats with Shri Phillipose about the situation in Travancore. I have also carefully studied the resolution of the last Working Committee of the State Congress and the well-thought-out elaborate plan of action to be taken all over Travancore, together with great precautions embodied in it to ensure non-violence. I have also read the telegram received by Shri Phillipose wherein he is told that if civil disobedience is further suspended, there will be much heart-burning and disappointment.

But, after having weighed the *pros* and *cons*, I have come to the conclusion that it will be in the interest of the cause not to start civil disobedience on March 25, and to suspend it till I advise resumption.

In *satyagraha*, there is no such thing as disappointment or heart-burning. The struggle always goes on in some shape or other till the goal is reached. A *satyagrahi* is indifferent whether it is civil disobedience or some other phase of the struggle to which he is called. Nor does he mind if, in the middle of the civil disobedience march, he is called upon to halt and do something else. He must have faith that it is all for the best. My own experience hitherto has been that each suspension has found the people better equipped for the fight and for control over forces of violence. Therefore, in advising suspension, I dismiss from my mind the fear that it may lead to desertion and disbelief. If it does, I should not feel sorry, for it would be to me a sign that the deserters did not know what *satyagraha* was, and the movement

was better without those who did not know what they were doing.

The reasons that have prompted me to tender this advice are these : If it is true that the Travancore Durbar have drafted untrained, raw men as police in order to strike terror among *satyagrahis*, it behoves the *satyagrahis* not to tempt the Durbar whilst suspension is a possibility. In view of the inhumanities which I believe have been perpetrated in various States, I am myself thinking out a new orientation of civil disobedience. I may fail. But if I am to succeed at all, I must have the quiet which can be produced only by suspension of civil disobedience wherever I am guiding it.

This suspension gives me a chance of mobilizing public opinion in favour of the movement for liberty in Travancore. It gives also an opportunity to the Travancore Durbar to reconsider their view of *satyagrahis* and their demands.

The Princes are themselves agitated over the tremendous awakening that has taken place among the people in the States. Suspension in Travancore and elsewhere gives them breathing time and an opportunity of thinking out their course of action, free from the burden of dealing with civil resistance.

Lastly, it is wise to allow the recent Viceregal message to the Princes to work itself among them.

↪ The *satyagrahis* of Travancore should know, too, that I have advised suspension of civil disobedience in Jaipur for similar reasons, and I am likewise holding the hands of workers in other States. But I give my assurance to Travancoreans and all concerned that I shall not sit idle during suspension, nor shall I be long in coming to a final decision, assuming that, in the meanwhile, no relief has come in the States in which civil disobedience was going on and is under suspension.



## SUSPENSION SHOULD CONTINUE

"Let the suspension enable the members of the State Congress and the Travancore public in general to realize the tremendous implications of non-violence, and I promise that its practice in thought, word and deed will hasten the progress towards their goal as nothing else will."

Shri Phillipose has received the following telegram from Trivandrum :

"Arrests continue. Kunju Krishna Pillai and others arrested. Kutzitharai Krishna Pillai, President, arrested to-day (24th). Kotah nominated President. Inform Gandhiji."

I had not expected that arrests would continue even after the suspension of civil disobedience. But, of course, my expectations need not be fulfilled. Suspension was advised for reasons publicly stated by me. If Travancore authorities consider it necessary to continue arrests, *satyagrahis* may not complain. Civil disobedience gives cause for arrest, or makes some action by the authorities necessary. Therefore, as a rule, suspension, without any previous understanding with the State, is generally followed not only by discontinuance of arrests, but even by discharge of those convicted for disobedience. If the Trivandrum wire is correct, authorities in Travancore have adopted an unexpected course. Their action need not perturb or perplex *satyagrahis*. Suspension should still continue. I have no doubt that such arrests will help the popular cause more than if civil disobedience was continued, assuming, of course, that there was no cause for arrests other than that arrested persons were *satyagrahis*. Since suspension has been declared, I hold it to be unnecessary to appoint a President instead of one arrested. The object of appointing successive Presidents, in place of those arrested, no longer subsists. There must be a provision in the ordinary constitution of the State Cong-

ress for conduct of business in the absence of the President.

I am painfully conscious of the fact that *satyagrahis* were unprepared for the exigency created by my advice. Let them console themselves, if they can, by the fact that though they may not just now appreciate or understand what may to them appear to be a new technique, it has been advised by one who claims to know the science of *satyagraha*. It calls for infinite patience and boundless faith in its efficacy. Everything comes right for those who watch, wait and pray.

Since writing the foregoing, I have seen the official reaction to suspension. An Associated Press message says that official opinion seems to be that civil disobedience is neither given up, nor even suspended. If there was any ground for suspicion, it should be dispelled by the State Congress' second President, Shri N. Shrikrishna Pillai, who, according to another Associated Press message, says :

"Civil disobedience has been suspended at the instance of Mahatmaji and it will be resumed only with his sanction, whatever time it may take. My instruction to the country is that the State Congress workers should preach the technique of non-violence (as different from non-violent direct action) to the masses as well as the message of *Khadi* and *Swadeshi*. The State Congress, as it stands at present, does not contemplate any direct action without command from Mahatmaji. I know that picketing of liquor shops is not breaking of any law and it is not prohibited by Government. Yet, fearing trouble and misunderstanding, we are not launching even that."

This emphatic statement puts the matter beyond any suspicion. I am hoping that civil resisters, who were eagerly looking forward to the resumption of civil disobedience, will conform to the letter and the spirit of the presidential instructions and thus show that if they understood what 'disobedience' was, they understood equally well what 'civil' meant.

I am convinced that much of our trouble has arisen from our not putting due emphasis in our actions on the implications of the word 'civil' which is the very opposite of criminal, uncivil and violent. Let the suspension en-

able the members of the State Congress and the Travancore public in general to realize the tremendous implications of non-violence, and I promise that its practice in thought, word and deed will hasten the progress towards their goal as nothing else will.

## THE STATES

“Potent and active non-violence cannot be cultivated unless the candidate goes through the necessary stages which require a lot of plodding.”

A clear understanding of the suspension of civil disobedience in the States is necessary, if the people are to reap the full benefit of it. One result—not unexpected—seems to have been that some States have stiffened their attitude and are resorting to repression they had not perhaps thought of before suspension. Where this happens, there is no cause for losing heart. Repression itself affords a training in *satyagraha*, even as an unsought war affords a training for the soldier. *Satyagrahis* should discover the causes of repression. They will find that repressed people are easily frightened by the slightest show of force, and are unprepared for suffering and self-sacrifice. This is, then, the time for learning the first lessons of *satyagraha*. Those who know anything of this matchless force should teach their neighbours to bear repression not weakly and helplessly, but bravely and knowingly. Thus, for example, a State declares an association illegal. The members may submit either because of fear of punishment or knowingly, because they do not yet wish to offer civil disobedience. In the latter case, they husband their energy and develop the will to resist non-violently. Individual members of the association will still carry on activities that may not be regarded as in themselves illegal. They will also carry on constitutional agitation to secure legal recognition for their organization. And if, in spite of voluntarily working within the four corners of the local laws, workers are arrested or otherwise ill-treated, they would cheerfully submit to the sufferings involved. So doing, they will examine themselves whether they bear any ill-will or anger towards

their persecutors, they will ask themselves whether they feel the presence of God as their true Helper and Guide in their difficulties. Indeed, such training, if properly and persistently taken, will generate in the learners a power of calm non-violent resistance which in itself will become invincible and, therefore, may render further effort by way of civil disobedience wholly unnecessary.

I am afraid I must plead guilty to being over-confident and hasty in launching previous civil disobedience campaigns. No harm seems to have accrued to the country because I had always my hand on the pulse of the country and, thank God, had no hesitation in retracing the step taken, if I scented danger or discovered an error of judgment or calculation. This much harm must, however, be admitted. The people having become used to laxity about previous preparation, now find it irksome to conform to the strictness in the observance of the unexciting rules of preparation. And yet, they are much the most important part of *satyagraha* training. Potent and active non-violence cannot be cultivated unless the candidate goes through the necessary stages which require a lot of plodding. If, however, I have succeeded in showing that repression, if properly understood, evokes natural and spontaneous resistance in a *satyagrahi*, perhaps, this knowledge will role the constructive effort and the waiting of their seeming insipidity. Indeed, the fact that these things appear insipid betrays want of appreciation of *satyagraha* and the beauty and efficacy of non-violence. In other words, the spirit of *satyagraha* has not sunk deep and violence still lurks, even though unconsciously, in the seeker's breast.

I hope, therefore, that repression, wherever it is resorted to, will not depress the repressed people, but will accelerate the pace of the constructive effort. It is necessary, so far as it is possible, to convince the powers that be of our absolutely non-violent intention. Such conviction is half the battle won. In order to carry this conviction home, there must be sufficient curb on our speech and writing, and our actions must be non-violent beyond doubt.

## REPRESSION IN TRAVANCORE

“Let the workers realize that they have one fruit of civil resistance in spite of its suspension. They have the privilege of undeserved suffering. And if they can undergo it without malice and anger, they will find themselves nearer their goal than hitherto.”

Shri Phillipose, who is specially with me to keep me informed of events in Travancore, has received a revealing wire from the President of the Travancore State Congress. It appears that though the leaders, who were arrested and imprisoned in anticipation of the contemplated civil disobedience, were released, arrests of others on some pretext or another continue. These are active, well-known workers. What is worse, special police, who are without uniforms and are untrained, are reported to be acting like *goondas*. They break up meetings by creating rowdyism and beating drums. They molest parties of workers doing constructive work. Thus, a party of 11 persons led by Shri Verghese, a well-known lawyer, was brutally assaulted in Quilon on March 31, and robbed of their cash. Several were seriously injured and are laid up.

Assuming that the information furnished to me is correct, it is a serious reflection on the authorities. I can only hope that such repression will die out, if only for want of retaliation on the part of the people. Let the workers realize that they have one fruit of civil resistance in spite of its suspension. They have the privilege of undeserved suffering. And, if they can undergo it without malice and anger, they will find themselves nearer their goal than hitherto. At least I have no reason for revising my opinion as to the necessity of suspension. Indeed, this thoughtless repression proves the wisdom of suspension.

## UNHAPPY TRAVANCORE

"If the workers can go through the ordeal without losing faith or heart and prosecute quietly and resolutely the constructive programme, *Swaraj* will come automatically. This is a bold statement; some will call it ridiculous. Nevertheless, it comes from the deepest conviction."

The following is the substantial translation of the resolutions passed by the Working Committee of the Travancore State Congress in the first week of the month :

"The Working Committee records its appreciation of the decision taken by the Acting President and the Council of Action to suspend C. D. pursuant to the advice of Mahatma Gandhi. The Working Committee desires to emphasize the need at this juncture for local and *taluka* Committees to concentrate on the constructive work and strengthen the organizational side of the movement.

"*Rural Reconstruction*: All Congress Committees are, therefore, directed to continue to work for the spread of *Khadi* and *Swa-deshi* and against the use of alcoholic drinks and tobacco. Each *taluka* committee may also undertake such other rural reconstruction programme as is particularly suited and is of immediate benefit to the *taluka*.

"*Khadi*: The Working Committee appoints a Sub-Committee consisting of Sjts. Elankath Ramakrishna Pillai (convener), G. Ramachandran and K. M. Bhoothalingam Pillai to submit an exhaustive report on the facilities available in the State for the spinning and weaving of *Khadi* and to submit a scheme for the same. This Committee is further directed to choose and recommend further centres where work can be immediately commenced.

"*Indigenous Weaving*: For the purpose of encouraging indigenous weaving (which is an important industry in the State), the Working Committee constitutes Sjts. R. Shankar (convener), K. S. Thangal and M. G. Koshi as a Sub-Committee to submit a scheme for the same.

"*Official Goondism*: The Working Committee views with deep concern the rowdiness that is being inspired to suppress the State Congress activities. The Committee recalls the hooliganism instigated by the police in the State Congress meetings during the months of May and June last year. Until the release of political prisoners in November last, State Congress meetings were sought

to be prevented either by prohibitory orders or by hooliganism or by declaring the State Congress illegal. After the release, though numerous meetings were held before the middle of January, there were no disturbances whatever. In the meantime, the Government began recruiting what is called the Special Police. These special policemen have no uniform and their pay was fixed at Rs. 5 per month. Towards the middle of January 1939, these special policemen commenced attending meetings at Neyyattinkara and Parur *talukas*.

"These so-called policemen and the rowdies under them have since been endeavouring to break up State Congress meetings. On March 11th, a dozen drunken rowdies attempted to break up a State Congress meeting at Thodupuzha by caterwauling and by staging a mock fight among themselves at the meeting. There was a repetition of the same disorderly behaviour on the 15th at Kuthattukulam, where the President was stripped naked on the platform. On the 19th at Quilon, drunken rowdies broke up a State Congress meeting by beating drums and creating other disturbances. On the 20th at Nagercoil, rowdies threw mud on the people. On the 22nd at Kuzithura, one of the drunken hooligans threatened to stab the President with a knife. On the 25th at Thodupuzah, rowdies brought kerosene oil cans to the meeting and began drumming them to the tune of obscene songs.

"Even after announcement on the 22nd of the suspension of *satyagraha*, volunteer *jathas* and meetings for constructive work have been subjected to *goondaism*. On March 30th at Parur, a State Congress meeting had to be dispersed owing to rowdyism. Even the refreshments that were being taken for the President were forcibly snatched away by the rowdies. On April 1st at Quilon, a constructive work *jatha* was set upon by rowdies on the public road and robbed of their money. The leader of the *jatha*, Sjt. P. J. Verghese, an advocate, suffered serious injuries.

"*Exhortation to Workers*: Last November, when the political prisoners were released, it was believed that we had at least secured the liberty to hold public meetings. The present situation, however, is worse than what existed in August last when the State Congress was declared illegal. The Committee deeply appreciates the firm faith in non-violence evinced by those who attended the recent State Congress meetings. This rowdyism is the result of the persistent policy of repression continued by Government even after the suspension of *satyagraha*. Not only is the Government unwilling to grant any of the demands of the State Congress, but it is continuing to arrest State Congress workers on some pretext or other, and endeavouring to obstruct even the carrying out of the constructive programme of the Congress. Whatever be the force of the repression and the extent of rowdyism that the Government may release, the State Congress will continue its work awaiting further instructions from Gandhiji. While protesting



against the hooliganism, inspired and encouraged by the Government, the Committee exhorts the people to carry on the work of the Congress with courage and with non-violence."

I would like the workers to realize that events there have more than justified suspension of civil disobedience. The authorities have provided them with ample opportunity for the exercise of patience and restraint. They have also provided them with opportunity for suffering without civil disobedience. If, therefore, the workers can go through the ordeal without losing faith or heart, and prosecute quietly and resolutely the constructive programme, *Swaraj* will come automatically. This is a bold statement; some will call it ridiculous. Nevertheless, it comes from the deepest conviction.

What worries me, however, is the statement in the concluding paragraph that "the State Congress will continue its work awaiting further instructions from Gandhiji." This declaration of faith in me is both touching and embarrassing. Let the workers know that whilst my advice and guidance are always at their disposal, I have no further instructions to give till new light dawns on me. I have prescribed a well-tried remedy. And I am quite capable of saying: "Go on repeating it, for it is never-failing." I am not likely easily to advise resumption of civil disobedience. There is too much violence and untruth in the air to warrant resumption anywhere. And, in the case of Travancore, as I have said, resumption is superfluous.

With reference to the alleged *goondaism* by the State, the public are bound to put implicit faith in the allegations, unless there is an impartial inquiry made. Surely, the mere denial by the authorities, no matter how often repeated, can carry no conviction. Nor will it serve the intended purpose if a local whitewashing commission is appointed. Confidence can be restored and truth brought to light only if the inquiry is made by outside judges of unimpeachable impartiality.

## NEW TECHNIQUE IN ACTION<sup>1</sup>

"It would not do for a *satyagrahi* to argue that the approach must be mutual. That assumes the existence of the spirit of *satyagraha* in the authorities, whereas *satyagraha* is offered in respect of those who make no claim to be *satyagrahis*. Hence, the first and the last work of a *satyagrahi* is ever to seek an opportunity for an honourable approach."

I have had prolonged conversations with Shri Pattam Thanu Pillai, Shri Verghese and Shri J. Phillipose over the situation in Travancore. My rich experiences in Rajkot show me that civil disobedience in Travancore was suspended at the right time. The Rajkot recantation teaches me that it is not enough to have withdrawn the charges against Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar. But it is necessary to recognize that Travancoreans have not only to reckon with the Maharaja, but also with his Dewan. I also observe that several Travancorean critics have asserted that suspension has led to greater repression. These critics do not know that suspension was not advised in order to avoid repression, nor even in expectation of its being stopped. It was advised in order to avoid popular violence, no matter how caused or by whom instigated, if it was instigated. It was also advised in order to avoid brutalization of human nature. These two objects may be said to have been attained in a fair measure. It was also advised in order to pave the way for an honourable understanding with the authorities and to educate the people in the true way of *ahimsa*. These objects have still to be worked for. Here my new light,<sup>2</sup> which I seem to see dimly, enables me to tender advice which, but for the light, I would perhaps not have been able to give with as much confidence as now.

<sup>1</sup> See *The New Technique*—p. 193.

<sup>2</sup> See *New Light*—p. 201.

I am convinced that direct negotiation should be opened with the authorities. Hitherto, the State Congress people have talked at the authorities and the latter at them. The result has been a widening of the gulf between the two. It would not do for a *satyagrahi* to argue that the approach must be mutual. That assumes the existence of the spirit of *satyagraha* in the authorities, whereas *satyagraha* is offered in respect of those who make no claim to be *satyagrahis*. Hence, the first and the last work of a *satyagrahi* is ever to seek an opportunity for an honourable approach. Now this is impossible so long as the heart is steeled against a belief even in the possibility, let alone advisability, of such approach. And hitherto, the impossibility has been unquestionably assumed. I have been a tacit party to it. I now know better. If the leaders have active *ahimsa* in them, they must cultivate a belief in the perfect possibility and necessity of such approach. And if they have that belief, the way will surely be open to them. In my own person, it is well known, I have always acted on that principle.

In making such an approach, it would be necessary to lower the key of our note. Our aim must remain what it is, but we must be prepared to negotiate for less than the whole so long as it is unmistakably of the same kind, and has in it inherent possibility of expansion. I have found that nowhere, with the only exception of Aundh,<sup>1</sup> are the Princes ready to part with all the power in favour of the people. Nor is the Paramount Power anxious for the people in the States to receive full responsible government. If I interpret its mind correctly, assuming that an institution can have a mind, it would be sorry if any State of importance copied the example of Aundh. But what is most important of all, the States' people themselves, as a mass, are nowhere prepared to pay the price. There is no mistaking the awakening that has taken place in the States. But it is not enough for the great purpose to be attained. It will be well to recognize this fact. In aiming beyond our capacity, we are likely

<sup>1</sup> See *Aundh Reforms*—p. 378.

to lose all. I would give much to have in all the States a reign of law instead of the reign of a person or persons, however well-meaning they may be. I can, then, see my way to build up responsible government on that solid foundation. But responsible government, which is only a gift without the will and the power of the people behind it, will be a mere paper responsibility, hardly worth the paper on which it may be printed.

The second object of suspension is closely related to the foregoing. If it is a fact that the atmosphere for immediate responsible government among the States is not propitious, and that the people are not ready to pay the price, it follows that they should have the proper training for it. I am not likely, lightly and in the near future, to advise mass *satyagraha* anywhere. There is neither adequate training, nor discipline among the people. I have not the shadow of a doubt that the people at large should pass one or more positive tests. Mere abstention from physical violence will not answer our purpose. In the centre of this programme of positive tests, I unhesitatingly put the spinning-wheel and all it means. If there is quick response, this can be a short course. But it may well be a long course if the people do not make an enthusiastic response. I know no other programme than the four-fold constructive programme of 1920. If the people do not take it up whole-heartedly, it is proof enough for me that they have no *ahimsa* in them, or not the *ahimsa* of my conception, or say they have no confidence in the present leadership. For me, there is no other test but what I have ever put before the nation since 1920. The new light tells me that I must not weaken, as I have done before, in exacting the discipline I have mentioned. I can quite clearly see my way to advise civil disobedience wherever the conditions mentioned are amply fulfilled. That civil disobedience will be individual, but in terms of *ahimsa* far more effective than any mass civil disobedience of the past. I must own that the past movements have been more or less tainted. I have no regret for them. For I knew no better, then. I had the sense and humility to retrace my steps whenever I discovered

blunders. Hence, the nation has gone forward from step to step. But the time has come for a radical change in the direction indicated.

Thus, my opinion on Travancore has resolved itself in the enunciation of my present mental condition and its reaction on the Travancore situation.

To sum up:

(1) Suspension of mass civil disobedience should be indefinite.

(2) There should be the will among the State Congress people to open a way to honourable negotiation with the authorities.

(3) There should be no anxiety about those *satyagrahis* who are in prison or new ones. If the spirit of *satyagraha* is rightly assimilated, these imprisonments and disabilities should hearten the people.

(4) The pitch of the immediate demands should be lowered, if necessary, in order to quicken the progress towards the final goal.

(5) The condition precedent to any civil disobedience is the fulfilment by the general mass of the constructive programme as a test, if nothing more, of their coming under the discipline of the State Congress.

It is hardly necessary for me to say that it is open to the workers to reject my advice. They should adopt it only if it appeals to their heads and their hearts, and tallies with their own reading of the local situation of which, I own, they must be better judges.

## UNFORTUNATE PEOPLE OF TRAVANCORE

"I mean no offence to the Princes when I say that, generally speaking, they may in a sense be compared to Herr Hitler. The difference is that they have not his dash, energy, resourcefulness and capacity."

An evil fate seems to dog the career of the people of Travancore, in so far as they are represented by the State Congress. The Congress is composed of some of its bravest and most self-sacrificing men. But, unfortunately, there never have been happy relations between them and the able Dewan of the State. The charges brought against him by the Congress in the preliminary stages of the movement for responsible government, somehow or other, acerbated the relations. The framers of the charges, as I happen to know from personal conversations with them, honestly believed in them. But when I reasoned with them that they were bound to withdraw them if their cause was the attainment of responsible government, and not the removal of the Dewan—a case in which India could not be interested—they saw the wisdom of my advice and promptly acted upon it. This cleared the ground for them and made their case unassailable. But I feel that the estrangement created by the charges between the Dewan and the leaders has persisted. I wish it had been otherwise. Though civil disobedience has been discontinued and personal talks between the Dewan and the leaders have taken place, cordiality between them has been lacking. On the contrary, there has been a ring of distrust about their talks. The Dewan has kept himself at a safe distance from the leaders. Negotiations after a struggle are generally preceded by discharge of prisoners and withdrawal of prosecutions and removal of other disabilities. In Travancore, these things have not happened. Cancellation of lawyers'

*sanads* and suspension of elected members of the Assembly remain. In fact, there is not much sign of an advance by the State towards the leaders. And now comes, like a bomb-shell, suspension of negotiations for political reform. These are the words of the Travancore *Communiqué* :

“For reasons, which must be obvious and which have, for instance, influenced the Government of India in their decision regarding the Federal negotiations, no conversations can possibly take place regarding any constitutional reforms until normal conditions are restored and the position is stabilized.”

This is followed by the following minatory warning :

“With reference to the statement to the Press issued by the President of the Travancore State Congress and his letter to the Dewan, Government wish to point out that while they do not intend to curb or put a check upon ordinary activities of political organizations, and while their ideas are unaltered as to consultations with political organizations and leaders as soon as conditions permit, they cannot possibly allow an organized scheme of agitation to be conducted at this juncture, in view of the present situation and especially the likelihood of increased unemployment owing to war conditions and the public excitement that may be caused by the situation regarding food-stuffs and other commodities. Such a scheme of agitation is bound to give rise to serious repercussions and results, and the Government, who have a duty to protect the law-abiding inhabitants of the State, cannot possibly take the risks involved thereby, nor can they at present devote any attention to questions relating to constitutional demands. Government desire to warn the Travancore State Congress and other organizations with similar programme that they will be forced to take steps, both under the ordinary law and under the Defence of Travancore, Proclamation and Rules, for maintaining normal conditions and a peaceful atmosphere in the State.”

The reason for suspension of contemplated reform is wholly unconvincing. So far as I know, in no State has such suspension been thought necessary. Indeed, I venture to suggest that the offer of the States to the British Government lacks the spirit assumed to be behind the aims of the Allies, *viz.*, the saving of democracy for the world. The States' offer, to be consistent with the time spirit, has to carry with it the will and the co-operation of their people. This is clearly impossible, if the

people of the States do not feel that they are partners with the Princes in the administration of the States. Viewed in this light, the grant to the people of the greatest measure of responsibility, consistent with their own safety, becomes a first and first-class war measure, so far as the States are concerned. And, who will say that the people of Travancore, where education has for years been given to the people on a liberal scale, are not ready for shouldering the burden of managing their own affairs? The responsibility in large States can mean no more than that of a big corporation in the provinces. This suspension of political advance in Travancore, on the ground of war, comes as a shock and a surprise. What connection political reform in the States has with the suspension of Federation is not easy to understand. But for the opposition of the Princes, the Muslim League and the Congress, Federation would have come long ago; and I make bold to say that the British Government would gladly bring it in to-day, if the three parties desire it. Political reform in the States is overdue and has to come irrespective of Federation.

I mean no offence to the Princes when I say that, generally speaking, they may, in a sense, be compared to Herr Hitler. The difference is that they have not his dash, energy, resourcefulness and capacity. Every one of the Princes has the powers of absolute autocrats, and they have, times without number, exercised such powers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The existence of this gigantic autocracy is the greatest disproof of British democracy, and is a credit neither to the Princes nor to the unhappy people who have to live under this undiluted autocracy. It is no credit to the Princes that they allow themselves powers which no human being, conscious of his dignity, should possess. It is no credit to the people who have mutely suffered the loss of elementary human freedom. And it is, perhaps, the greatest blot on British rule in India. But we are too near the event to realize the falsity called "Princes' India" or "Indian India." The system will break under its own intolerable weight. My humble non-violent effort is to induce all the three parties to wash the triple sin. Even one of them can take the decisive step and it will affect all. But it will be glorious if the three together realize the enormity of the sin and by a combined effort wash it."—From Gandhiji's Foreword to *The Status of Indian Princes* by Pyarelal.



In their own sphere, they enjoy powers which the British monarchs have not possessed for centuries. The present British King is merely the first citizen of his country. He cannot arrest a single person at his mere wish. He cannot administer corporal punishment to a single person without coming like any other citizen under the law of the State. This severe limitation on the British monarchy is rightly the envy of the world. But every Indian Prince is a Hitler in his own State. He can shoot his people without coming under any law. Hitler enjoys no greater powers. If I am not mistaken, the German constitution does impose some limits on the Fuehrer. Great Britain's position as the self-constituted guardian of democracy is compromised, so long as it has more than 500 autocrats as its allies. The Princes will render Great Britain a real service when they can offer their services not as so many autocrats, but as true representatives of their people. I venture, therefore, to suggest to Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, the distinguished constitutional lawyer that he is, that he has ill served the people and the Prince of Travancore and the British Government by suspending political reforms and threatening the State Congress with dire consequences, if it dares to carry on the contemplated agitation for political advance during these times.

## TWEEDLEDUM AND TWEEDLEDEE

"It should be a proud day for the Travancore Maharaja and for his people when it can be said of the latter that by patient and quiet training they made themselves fit to shoulder the responsibility of managing the affairs of their State."

In dealing with the situation in Travancore last week, I omitted to refer to the controversy between the Dewan, and the State Congress as to the source of the information on the basis of which I had wired to the Dewan hoping that his notice did not ban the conference that was to be held in Travancore by the State Congress. Shri Thanu Pillai had said that neither he nor any other member of the State Congress was responsible for suggesting that there was any ban. He could not, therefore, say that my telegram to the Dewan was based on such information. In saying this, he was quite correct. As a matter of fact, however, my wire was certainly based upon the information contained in Shri Verghese's wire. But there was no suppression of fact by Shri Verghese. Shri Thanu Pillai made his position clear in his letter to the Dewan dated the 23rd ultimo thus :

"In the letter under reference Government seem to disbelieve my statement that no one from the State Congress informed Gandhiji that there was a ban on the conference. Your contention is, at best, an inference from a telegram from Gandhiji, while my assertion is confined to facts within my knowledge. The following is the substance of the Government *Communiqué* as communicated by wire to Gandhiji by the Chairman of the Reception Committee:

'Government sprung surprise in issuing Press Note this noon in view outbreak war state of emergency arisen, necessitating measures safeguarding public peace and avoiding incidents likely creating public excitement or large concourses. Regarding conference, preparations being made for processions and demonstrations and as large crowd may gather at conference, Government in public interest call upon conference organizers and all political or other organizations in the State to postpone or stop assemblages at pre-

sent juncture and until further notice.'

"Gandhiji might have taken the Government *Communiqué* calling upon the organizers of the conference and all political or other organizations to postpone or stop such assemblages at the present juncture and until further notice as virtually amounting to prohibiting all meetings and processions. If Government still persist in their contention that the State Congress misled Gandhiji, they should in fairness substantiate it."

The language, according to the Travancore legal form, may not mean a ban. I could give it no other meaning. Whether *it* was technically a ban or not, its effect was that the Congress authorities felt obliged to cancel processions and the other demonstrative part of their programme. If, therefore, there is any difference between the language used by the Dewan in the Government *Communiqué* and a ban, it is the same that exists between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. It is also suggested that the *Communiqué* had to be issued because of objections taken to the holding of the conference. Why should a big organization be prevented from functioning properly, merely because somebody objects to its so doing? I can only appeal to the Dewan not to harass the leaders of the State Congress beyond the point of endurance. They should not be made useless even for constructive constitutional activities. This is their humble programme :

"This conference resolves that the immediate programme of the State Congress will be:

1. Intense, systematic and countrywide propaganda for educating the people on the issue of responsible government.
2. The strengthening of the State Congress organization throughout the State and putting the same on self-reliant and permanent foundations.
3. Real and effective mass contact through a carefully planned programme, emphasizing a mass literacy campaign, *Khadi* and *Swadeshi* and prohibition.
4. Establishment of a permanent volunteer and Desh Sevika service.
5. Opening of centres or camps for a minimum period of training for workers in the various programmes outlined above.

In order to leave no room for doubt, this conference has to point out that the above programme will be wholly constitutional, and that the State Congress has no intention of creating a conflict with

Government in the prosecuting of the above programme. The object of the above programme is to make the constitutional demand of the people irresistible."

They do not ask for immediate responsible government. Surely, they have every right to educate the people along the lines of responsible government. It should be a proud day for the Travancore Maharaja and for his people, when it can be said of the latter that by patient and quiet training they made themselves fit to shoulder the responsibility of managing the affairs of their State.

## TRAVANCORE AGAIN

“The policy of the Travancore Government is understandable. The repression seems to me to be wholly unjustifiable. It is wrong to put the best and wisest citizens in jail. I know that those who have been arrested are sincere, devoted and able workers.”

There was a forced lull in Travancore after the acceptance by the State Congress of my advice to suspend civil disobedience. But things seem to have gone from bad to worse. The inactivity of the State Congress was perhaps mistaken for fatigue or worse. I knew that the State Congress leaders were being held down by me. Their loyalty was great. But when the other day a deputation came to me and asked me whether, in order to avoid civil disobedience, they were to stop even ordinary activity which one knows as political, I told them that even that severe restraint might be part of the people's training. But I also told them that I could not judge for them in such matters. I could not have the data they had. They could not help me in judging the atmosphere in Travancore. Physical presence there was necessary to enable me to judge. No second-hand evidence could be of much assistance, at least not to me. I told them, therefore, that they must judge for themselves, irrespective of my opinion. For I was not prepared to take the risk of curbing even harmless political activity for fear of imaginary consequences. The leaders should, therefore, consider themselves free from any restraint from me.

After the greatest deliberation, they took two steps embodied in restrained language. Their resolutions and the Press Note in reply are printed below.

In my opinion, the State Congress had every right to dissociate themselves from the glorification of the Dewan's administration. Even an adversary is entitled

to many happy returns of the day. But it is another matter when an attempt is made, as it is said to have been made in the present case, to make political capital out of an innocent event like a birth-day. The first resolution is a protest against such political use of the Dewan's birth-day.

The second resolution has nothing controversial about it. It is a mere assertion of the right to hold public meetings, etc.

News has now been received that Shri Thanu Pillai, Shri Phillipose and three others were arrested on the 2nd inst., and that the State Congress office was taken possession of by the Travancore Government. Furniture, it is said, was thrown out.

The policy of the Travancore Government is understandable. The repression seems to me to be wholly unjustifiable. It is wrong to put the best and wisest citizens in jail. I know that those who have been arrested are sincere, devoted and able workers.

I can send no better consolation to the Travancore State Congress workers than that those who go to jail should do so joyously and with the determination to serve the whole period of imprisonment. I have no doubt that it is the surest way to *Swaraj*, if those who are imprisoned possess pure hearts.

#### RESOLUTION ON THE DEWAN'S BIRTH-DAY

"The All-Travancore State Congress Committee deeply regrets that circumstances have been created in this country to necessitate this resolution relating to the celebration of the *Shashtiabdapoorthi* (60th birthday) of Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, the Dewan. This Committee would not have concerned itself with any such celebrations, if it were a matter solely confined to his friends and well-wishers. But considering the fact that the celebrations are sought to be conducted in the name of the public, and in view of the agencies and methods employed to have these celebrations conducted and the real purpose for which the occasion is being utilized, this Committee, as a political body, consistent with its duty to the country, feels bound to openly declare its view regarding this matter.

"Celebrations in honour of or at the instance of an officer in authority, especially the head of the administration, are definitely

opposed to public policy. The Government of Travancore themselves have made authoritative pronouncements, discountenancing such attempts even so recently as May last. Nevertheless, efforts are being inspired to celebrate the *Shashthiabdapoorthi* of Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar in such a manner as to make it appear to the outside world that his administration is both successful and popular. The Committee feels it its duty to lay bare straightway the unvarnished truth that the administration of Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar has been neither successful nor popular.

"Sir C. P. has, throughout the period of his administration, been against democracy and, during the recent talks with the State Congress deputation on constitutional reforms, has not concealed his opposition to the idea of responsible government even as a distant goal. He has been persistent in his resistance to democratic advancement, and has not scrupled to adopt any means within his reach in his endeavour to suppress a genuine popular movement for the establishment of responsible government.

"Sir C. P.'s administration has been characterized by the suppression of civil liberties, which had long been enjoyed by the people of Travancore. He has effectively muzzled the Press in this country. Organized *goondaism* at public meetings had disfigured the public life of the country. Even mild criticism of his measures and acts is viewed with obvious disfavour by him, and those who have incurred his displeasure are visited with dire consequences. Thus, freedom of the Press, freedom of speech and freedom of association have been throttled by him. Further, it is a regrettable fact that Sir C. P. has been responsible for a growing lack of confidence in the minds of the people in the judicial administration of the State.

"His policy of repression has been responsible for the brutal excesses on the part of the police and the military, extending even to shooting down of many persons in different parts of the country. Even a legitimate demand for an impartial inquiry into these occurrences has not received any response from him.

"The genuine and earnest attempts of the State Congress to bring about a calm and peaceful atmosphere in the State, the indefinite suspension of civil disobedience, the direct approach to the Dewan to settle the matters in controversy between the Government and the people—none of these had the least effect to bring about a change of heart in Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar. He has not even attempted to create an atmosphere of peace in the country. Political prisoners are still in jail. Prosecutions started against State Congress workers are still pending. The disabilities imposed, as a result of political convictions, still continue. Even the consideration of the question of constitutional advancement has been abandoned on the pretext of war. Sir C. P. has thus, in the words of Gandhiji, ill served the people of Travancore. The State has

clearly suffered a vital set-back in many directions under Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar.

"The occasion of his *Shashthiabdapoorthi*, nevertheless, is being availed of to glorify his administration and to cover up the widespread discontent and dissatisfaction consequent on his administration. Organizations and individuals under obligations to Government in various ways are being suborned for this purpose. Officers of Government, such as magistrates, *tehsildars*, *munsiffs* and police inspectors figure largely in the personnel of the celebration committees, and their influence is being freely exerted to secure contributions and to get up memorials and addresses. The demoralization, consequent on such interference, is self-evident.

"This Committee, therefore, emphatically repudiates these efforts purporting to be on behalf of the public. This Committee entirely dissociates itself from and lodges its emphatic protest against all attempts that are being made to celebrate the *Shashthiabdapoorthi* of Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, the Dewan, in the name of the people of Travancore."

#### RESOLUTION ON GENERAL SITUATION

"The Committee considered the situation arising from the discontinuance by the Dewan of the talks between the Government and the representatives of the State Congress, and the Press *Communiqué* issued by the Government on 23rd September in which they say that they will invoke the provisions of the ordinary law and the Defence of Travancore Proclamation to suppress any scheme of constitutional agitation in the country. The Committee condemns the arbitrary manner in which the negotiations have been terminated. The reasons given for such termination are certainly unconvincing. The Committee, therefore, reaffirms its intention to carry on constitutional agitation for the establishment of responsible government in the country. Threats, on the part of the Government to suppress even constitutional agitation, shall not deter the Committee from pursuing its clear course.

"The programme of the State Congress for the immediate future shall be:

1. That the 8th, 16th, and 24th of every Malabar month shall be observed as the Civil Liberties Day, Responsible Government Day and Political Prisoners' Day.
2. That the organization of volunteers and *Desh Sevikas* and opening of training centres for them shall be undertaken immediately.
3. That the programme shall be revised from time to time by the Working Committee to suit conditions then existing."

#### TRAVANCORE GOVERNMENT PRESS NOTE

"In a *Communiqué* issued on the 23rd September 1939, the Tra-



vancore Government pointed out that they cannot permit an organized scheme of agitation at this juncture in view of the present situation and the industrial and economic position of the people who are affected by the adverse conditions produced by the War, in a country so dependent on imports and exports as Travancore. They gave a warning that such a scheme of agitation is bound to give rise to serious repercussions, and the Government, who have a duty to protect the law-abiding citizens of the State, would be forced to take all necessary steps for maintaining normal conditions.

"The Travancore State Congress have now arranged for the holding of public meetings on the 8th, 16th, and 24th of every Malabar month, these days being styled as Civil Liberties Day, Responsible Government Day and Political Prisoners' Day respectively. Volunteer rallies, opening of training camps, and what is called organization work are also contemplated. It is noted that these demonstrations are timed to begin on the day preceding the commencement of the functions in celebration of the birth-day of His Highness the Maharaja.

"All persons are hereby warned not to take part in these demonstrations and rallies; and against attempts by means of pamphlets, leaflets, etc., to inflame public opinion and promote agitation and unrest. Persons organizing or taking part in such agitation and demonstrations are liable to be dealt with under the Defence of Travancore Proclamation and Rules without further notice."

Huzur Cutchery,  
Trivandrum, 30th October, 1939

*Chief Secretary to Government*

## TRAVANCORE

"All communism is not dangerous.....I know many friends who delight in calling themselves communists. They are as harmless as a dove. I call myself a communist in their company. The underlying belief of communism is good and as old as the hills."

Some Travancoreans have thought I had neglected them. But I had not. It is no pleasure to me to criticize any State. Much of my work is done by negotiation. I criticize when I must. So, when I was told by common friends that Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar would like to meet me if an opportunity occurred, I stopped all reference to Travancore affairs. But the meeting was not to be. In reply to my inquiry, I have the following extraordinary wire from him :

"Have just received your telegram. In view developments in India, including your recent statement and resolution of Working Committee with similar aims though different programmes, and also having regard to the close, though unacknowledged, connection existing between many of the leaders of Travancore State Congress and communist activities which have come to light after arrest of K. C. George, and in view of the openly hostile activities of Mr. T. M. Verghese and of Mr. G. Ramachandran who has been chosen by you to give advice as to Travancore, no useful purpose is likely to be served by any meeting. In these circumstances, you are, of course, free to comment on Travancore affairs, but it is hoped that you will not accept versions furnished by persons who are discredited here and who depend for their influence, collection of funds, and their political existence on possibility of getting periodical statements from you on one-sided data furnished by them. Most of the leading members of State Congress, including Messrs V. K. Velayudhan, M. N. Parameswaran Pillai and others have openly dissociated themselves from State Congress activities. They number over 60."

I fail to see the connection between the Working Committee's resolution and my recent statement on the one hand, and Travancore affairs on the other. The

Working Committee have not even interested themselves in Travancore affairs. The idea of our meeting did not originate with me. Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar thought of it months ago. Even a date was fixed. But owing to a pressing engagement he had to keep, our meeting was postponed. As late as the 3rd of April, he had wired saying he was writing to me about the interview. Have the Working Committee's resolution and my statement so altered the situation that our meeting has become undesirable? The other things, the worthy Dewan refers to, are the very things which would have made our meeting fruitful. He had but to convince me that the State Congress was involved in communist activities of a dangerous nature, and I would have washed my hands clean of the local Congress and its doings. All communism is not dangerous. I do not know that Shri K. C. George is a communist. I warn the Dewan against being prejudiced by the mere name. I know many friends who delight in calling themselves communists. They are as harmless as a dove. I call myself a communist in their company. The underlying belief of communism is good and as old as the hills. But I have strayed.

If Shri T. M. Verghese and Shri G. Ramachandran are untrustworthy, again our meeting is necessary to convince me of their untrustworthiness. I must confess, I have profound admiration for their courage, self-sacrifice, ability and integrity. Shri Ramachandran is an old member of Sabarmati *Asbrama* who has never given me cause for distrusting him. Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar knows me enough to feel sure that I would not hesitate to own my mistake if I discovered it. It was his duty, as it still is, to make an effort to convince me that the sources of my information are tainted. The extraordinary telegram has made me conclude that Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar has nothing against the Congress or its members, except that they are patriots without reproach and without fear. He hates their philosophy and seeks to crush them. All the evidence in my possession points that way, and the telegram confirms my impression.

I have made an offer which I repeat. Let there be

an impartial open inquiry into the whole conduct of the State Congress and its treatment by the State. Let the judge or judges be outsiders of known integrity. I shall advise the State Congress to accept the findings of such a court.

If this simple offer is not accepted, I must be pardoned for rejecting the interested denials by officials of the State Congress allegations, and believing them and asking the public to do likewise.

## TRAVANCORE

"The terrible repression may thin the ranks of the State Congress. But even if there is one true representative left to hold aloft the torch of non-violent liberty, he will be quite enough to multiply himself till every Travancorean becomes an apostle of life-giving freedom."

In the hope of having a talk with Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, and possibly arriving at some way out of the *impasse*, I was suppressing the manifestos sent to me by succeeding Acting Presidents. The last received was from Shri Achuthan, an Ezhava advocate, about the last week of June. From the manifesto I extract only statements of facts, omitting as far as possible all argument and inferences:

"Processions and meetings have been violently broken up by the special police and the ordinary police without even the semblance of prohibitory orders. To quote from the speech of Shri K. Santhanam M.L.A. (Central) which he delivered at Madras after a brief visit to Travancore, he said: 'My impression is there is police *raj* in Travancore. No one could speak with any sense of security or discuss matters even with friends. The Government appear determined not to allow any discussion on responsible government, and are willing to resort to any methods to prevent it. All normal channels of public expression have been stopped.'

"Repression has worked ruthlessly along three main lines: 1. Legal terrorism, 2. Police terrorism, 3. Complete muzzling of the Press.

1. *Legal Terrorism* has taken the shape of 'the Defence of Travancore Proclamation.' It is not the actual number of those arrested and detained for indefinite periods under this Act, but the threat of it against every man and woman with any active sympathy towards the State Congress that has created a grave situation. Several people have been arrested under this Act and then let off, just to show that the authorities can do anything with anybody. Many important leaders have been imprisoned under this Act without trial and for indefinite periods.

2. *Police Terrorism* has meant more than what will be ordinarily understood by that term. In Travancore, it has meant more than

the forcible dispersal of processions and meetings. It has meant secret as well as open *goondaism* by what are called the special police, who wear no uniforms and who get only Rs. 5 a month. This body of special police contains, in many cases, the worst rowdies and drunkards in various localities. Their special business is to quietly mix with the crowds and start sudden *goondaism*. It has become physically impossible to hold any decent meeting or procession or demonstration in the face of such *goondaism*. In Neyyattinkara, Alleppey, Palai, Karunagapilly and many other places such *goondaism* has appeared openly.

3. *Muzzling of the Press*. No doubt, there are several papers in Travancore which appear regularly. Not one of them would publish reports or news of State Congress meetings and demonstrations. Statements issued by Acting President of the State Congress or by State Congress leaders never appear in them. In many cases, people in one part of the State never knew anything of what happened in another part except from news appearing in the English papers at Madras. This was proved when police frightfulness occurred in Neyyattinkara and Palai.

"But the Travancore Government did not rest content with the above items of repression. Every officer, from the highest to the lowest, went about the country treating every State Congressman or sympathizer not merely as one belonging to a disturbing political party, but as an enemy to be hunted down by every means in their power. Another severe trial for those engaged in the struggle has been police violence in lock-ups. Volunteers who are under arrest and awaiting trial are mercilessly beaten and very often discharged after several weeks of detention without trial.

"Every time State Congress leaders published allegations against the Travancore police, the Government as often came out with categorical and wholesale denials. But Shri G. Ramachandran's specific allegations regarding police terrorism at Neyyattinkara and Palai published in *The Hindu* of Madras, supported by unimpeachable data, have at last compelled the Government to order an official enquiry. It is significant that the enquiry has been ordered long after the Government had published categorical and wholesale denials of the allegation. The public are still awaiting the findings of the enquiry.

"The most disquieting development in the present situation has yet to be related. This is the direct and open encouragement given to the various communal organizations in Travancore by the authorities, including the Dewan, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar himself. At one time, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar used to say that it was the presence of various communal organizations in Travancore which prevented him from inaugurating any scheme of responsible government in Travancore. But to-day his policy clearly appears to be to encourage each and every communal or-

ganization to develop along separate lines and thus make political unity impossible. Officers of Government, including the Dewan, take part in meetings of the various communal organizations. Lovers of Travancore know that, if this process is allowed to continue, Travancore will soon become a battle-ground for the various communal organizations."

I know that there will be an official contradiction. I have already suggested that such contradictions can have no value, unless they are backed by a definite promise of an impartial enquiry. Officials stake nothing when they issue unprovable contradictions, whereas State Congress Presidents stake their liberty and the prestige of their institution when they make rash statements.

The balance of probability, therefore, must be in their favour. The quotation given by Shri Achuthan from Shri Santhanam's speech in his support is not to be lightly brushed aside.

I sent a copy of Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar's wire to Shri Ramachandran. He sends a comment from which I take the following :

"I can show that our Working Committee kept 'communist tendencies' clearly and absolutely out of the struggle. Shri K. C. George, who is referred to, was one of the severest critics of our Working Committee, and considered our work and programme as thoroughly useless.....It is absolutely false to say that we depend on Bapu's periodical statements for collecting our funds and for our existence. If this were so, there should be to-day no State Congress. During the last eight or nine months, Bapu has not said a word about Travancore. Our cause is so patently just that it does not depend even on Bapu. It depends on its own inherent justice. Bapu can, of course, help our cause. But that is different from saying that our movement depends on Bapu.....

"Most of the leading members of the Travancore State Congress, including Shri V. K. Velayudhan and M. N. Parameswaran Pillai and others, have openly dissociated themselves, says Sir C. P. Yes, these two gentlemen have done so. But neither of them has said that the State Congress is in the wrong. Shri Velayudhan stated that he withdrew in obedience to the Mandali of the Ezhava communal organization which has now been captured by the friends of Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar. Shri M. N. Parameswaran Pillai has nearly apologized and recovered his *sanad* to practise law. How do these actions touch the demand and the programme and the stand of the State Congress? But besides these two gentlemen, no prominent leader of the State Congress has gone back in any

sense. The number 60 requires close analysis.....Then, there is my second statement on the Palai atrocities which *The Hindu* published and a copy of which I am enclosing. It was, then, stated on behalf of the Travancore Government that there would be an official enquiry and a Press *Communiqué*. It is weeks now since this appeared, and no enquiry or *Communiqué* has been heard of. It was a tight corner into which the Travancore Government was pushed by specific and unchallengeable allegations. They had denied everything in their first *Communiqué*. Then, when I replied, they said there would be an enquiry and a *Communiqué*. But nothing has happened yet."

I believe every word of what Shri Ramachandran says. The terrible repression may thin the ranks of the State Congress. But even if there is one true representative left to hold aloft the torch of non-violent liberty, he will be quite enough to multiply himself till every Travancorean becomes an apostle of life-giving freedom. A friend sent me the other day a *bon mot* of an American President: "One true man of courage represents a majority." I have quoted from memory. But there is no mistake about the meaning. Let every member of the State Congress take it to heart, and believe that nothing is lost if one true man survives the repression. As it is, I know that there are numerous men and women of the State Congress who are seasoned enough to stand the most rigorous repression that the wit of the resourceful Dewan of Travancore and his advisers can devise.



## SIR C.P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR'S EXTRAVAGANCES

“I venture to suggest that the best guarantee of their (Princes’) status consists not in the treaties with the British, but in the good-will, contentment and co-operation of their own people and the friendship of the people of non-State India.”

I have seen Dr. Katju’s spirited reply to Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar’s recent statement on the position of Indian States. In my opinion, the latter’s thesis is self-condemned. His extravagant claims will make not the slightest difference when the British are ready, or compelled by events, to recognize India’s Independence. Pyarelal has shown from authentic documents the flimsy nature of the status enjoyed by the States. The guarantee is a convenient excuse for denying India’s claim. But it will have no validity when the claim becomes irresistible. Surely, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, as a constitutional lawyer and student of British history, knows all this. I wholly agree with Dr. Katju when he says that the Dewan of Travancore is ill serving his own and the other Princes by inducing in them the belief that the British guarantee will perpetuate their and their successors’ autocracy against the just claims of the States’ people and the people of India as a whole. I venture to suggest that the best guarantee of their status consists not in the treaties with the British, but in the good-will, contentment and co-operation of their own people and the friendship of the people of non-State India. Time is running in favour of Indian Independence and against all interests adverse to the people and their natural aspiration. I was, therefore, pained and surprised to find the Rana Saheb of Dholpur hastily echoing the phrases of Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar.

## TRAVANCORE

“Just causes, truthfully and non-violently conducted, have always survived repression and drawn sympathy from unexpected quarters. I call such sympathy divine help.”

Shri P. J. Sebastian sends me the following ‘true copy’ of the Press Note of the Travancore Government :

“The Government of Travancore have observed with regret that, in the columns of his newspaper *Harijan*, Mr. Gandhi has afforded hospitality to statements emanating from Messrs. Achuthan and G. Ramachandran, the former being the latest President and latter the propagandist of the moribund Travancore State Congress. Evidently, it is hoped by these statements and the comments of Mr. Gandhi to force an outside enquiry and outside mediation upon the State. Mr. Achuthan, who is a Travancore subject, is reported to be moving between British Malabar and Cochin and his statement was published some weeks ago. This Government has resolved to ignore it, realizing as they did that such statements have been merely variants of the baseless assertions made by Mr. Ramachandran repeated in different phraseology.

“In view, however, of the publicity which accompanies statements associated with Mr. Gandhi, and in order that the public may not be misled, as Mr. Gandhi allows himself to be misled by such statements, the Travancore Government propose to take appropriate legal proceedings against Messrs. Achuthan and G. Ramachandran, in the course of which the truth or falsity of their averments can be tested.

Huzur Cutchery, Trivandrum  
29th July, 1940

(Sd.) M. K. NILAKANTA AIYAR,  
*Chief Secretary to Government*”

I have published the text without interfering with the spelling or the grammar. In sending the copy, Shri Sebastian says :

“It has not up to now appeared in any of the Madras papers. The object of the Press Note seems to be to warn the Travancore papers not to copy the article on ‘Travancore’ in the *Harijan* of the 28th July. It is worthy of note that none of the Travancore papers

has published the *Harijan* article of the 28th, though the article of the 21st, together with the reply of the Dewan, had been published."

I am publishing everything important coming to me about Travancore, because I believe it to be true. The threatened proceedings against Shri Ramachandran and Achuthan will not disprove the statements published. They will confirm the impression that the Travancore State authorities are determined by all means at their disposal to crush the movement for liberty. If past experience is any guide, this Travancore repression will fail to crush the movement. Note, how the issues are evaded in the Press Note. There is no demand for an 'outside inquiry' or 'outside mediation,' nor is there any question of force. The Dewan himself and many others in Travancore are outsiders. But they are not forced upon the State when the Maharaja engages them, and the use of the word 'outsider' ceases to have any meaning for the appointer. It is preposterous to use the word 'force' for friendly suggestions by the Press, or appeals by State subjects, or to use words 'outsiders' and 'outside mediation' for suggestions to the State to bring impartial judges from outside. Were Justice Hunter, himself a non-Punjabi, and his non-Punjabi colleagues forced upon the Punjab Government when, in response to public agitation, Government appointed the Hunter Committee? Or, was Justice Ramesam forced upon Sir Mirza Ismail when he appointed that learned outsider to conduct an inquiry into the Viduraswatham shooting? The public is bound to give a sinister meaning to this gross misuse of the language by the Travancore authorities. Again, if the Travancore people are hostile or apathetic to the doings of the State Congress, where is the occasion for the suppression of the State Congress bulletins and newspaper comments? Just causes, truthfully and non-violently conducted, have always survived repression and drawn sympathy from unexpected quarters. I call such sympathy divine help. God works in mysterious ways. Let the persecuted State Congress people have faith that God is with them.

## TRAVANCORE

"If bans are imposed on public meetings because they are held under the auspices of certain organizations which ask for responsible government, they have to be defied. The leaders of such movements cannot stultify themselves by entirely gagging themselves. It is too great a price to pay for nominal liberty."

In spite of the high percentage of education among men and women in Travancore, there is no such thing as real liberty in that unhappy land. Shri Thanu Pillai, the President of the State Congress, and Shri Ramachandran, a member of the Executive of the Travancore State Congress, have been sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment for defying the ban on meetings of the Congress. If bans are imposed on public meetings because they are held under the auspices of certain organizations which ask for responsible government, they have to be defied. The leaders of such movements cannot stultify themselves by entirely gagging themselves. It is too great a price to pay for nominal liberty. Shri T. Pillai and Shri Ramachandran will serve the cause better through their imprisonment than they will by submitting to gagging orders. Here is Shri Ramachandran's statement before the Magistrate :

"There was first of all a *Communiqué* issued by the Chief Secretary to the Government of Travancore, in which he had said that the celebration of the All-India States' People's Day would not be permitted. This was followed by an order of the District Magistrate, Trivandrum, served on some of us prohibiting the celebration of the States' People's Day. My offence relates to this order of the District Magistrate. In that order it was made out that, if such a meeting was held and speeches made, there was the likelihood of a breach of the peace in Trivandrum. It further stated that, if the meeting was held and speeches made, there would come about an estrangement between the people and the Government. Immediately on receipt of this prohibitory

order, Shri Pattam Thanu Pillai and myself wrote a letter to the District Magistrate, in which we made it clear that this meeting was to be held not for the purpose of initiating an agitation, but that it was just in response to an all-India observance. The meeting was to be held not in the public place, but inside the Congress House premises. We made it clear also that the apprehension of a breach of the peace was absolutely unfounded. We had said that, if in spite of this clarification the meeting was prohibited, we would be violating the order. This explanatory letter did not elicit any reply from the District Magistrate. So the meeting was held. After Shri Thanu Pillai's arrest, I took charge of the meeting and spoke for an hour. I must observe here that I have never seen a quieter meeting in my life. The position we took, therefore, *viz.*, that there would be absolutely no breach of the peace, was confirmed by the meeting itself. The second point in the District Magistrate's order was that the meeting would bring about estrangement between the Government and the people. In my view, this certainly was not one of the results of the meeting. It was, therefore, proved beyond any shadow of doubt that the District Magistrate's apprehensions were absolutely unfounded. Therefore, though I am technically guilty—because I certainly did violate the District Magistrate's order—the District Magistrate, and not I, was in the wrong. I am entitled, therefore, to an honourable acquittal. This technical guilt I had to take upon myself for the simple reason that I was not going to be persuaded not to do a thing which I considered wholly right, and which my self-respect dictated that I should do."

## PRICE FOR GAINING LIBERTY

"I have been told that the people have been behaving with exemplary non-violence and that the crowd bravely suffered the firing. If that is proved to be the case, I for one will rejoice over the loss of life. It is the necessary price paid for gaining liberty."

I enjoy the privilege of friendship with Sir Mirza Ismail. I know that he is anxious to liberalize the administration of Mysore. I have found him to be willing to listen to the advice and suggestions of friends. And I know that the tragedy which has been enacted in Mysore has filled him with distress. I have read the *Communiqué* issued by the Mysore Government. It does not read convincing to me. But for the advice that I am about to tender, I do not need an accurate knowledge of all the facts surrounding the tragedy. Seeing that I receive pressing letters, deputations and wires from representative people of Mysore for guidance, and seeing that I know so many workers of Mysore who look to me for a solution of their difficulties, it would be wrong on my part, at this critical juncture, to content myself merely with sending letters or even telegrams of advice.

One or two facts stand out prominently. There has been firing upon an unarmed crowd, resulting in several deaths and many more being injured. I will assume, though the information received by me on behalf of the public is to the contrary, that there was some provocation. We can never know with absolute certainty whether the firing was justified. There is no code which can give an exact definition of justification. It must always be a matter of opinion, and opinions always have a knack of varying. What I, therefore, venture to suggest to the Mysore Government is that they should not be satisfied with making an inquiry, however impartial it may

be. The demonstration that is going on in Mysore about the National Flag is a symptom of the time.

I must confess that I was not aware of a popular awakening in Mysore on a wide scale, as there undoubtedly is. It gladdens me, as I hope it gladdens the Mysore authorities. I suggest, therefore, that the best and only remedy for the Maharaja and his Adviser, Sir Mirza Ismail, is to divest the Government of its autocracy and to make popular representatives responsible for the administration of Mysore. The responsibility must be on the broadest scale possible, if it is to ensure peace in Mysore. It has been suggested that the State being backward, responsibility can only be a plant of slow growth. I have never subscribed to that doctrine. It is not a compliment to the States. One would expect them, with all the natural advantages in their favour, to show much greater progress than in unwieldy British India.

To the leaders of the people of Mysore, I will say: These tragic deaths and injuries inflicted upon innocent persons would be a small price paid for the liberty of the people. They may make an inquiry and the injured and the heirs to the deceased may receive compensation. But if I were a Mysorean, I would not lay stress on personal gains; I would use these sacrifices for gaining the liberty for which they had been made voluntarily or involuntarily. They should also remember that one condition of success is the retention of a truly non-violent spirit and atmosphere under every conceivable circumstance. I have been told that the people have been behaving with exemplary non-violence and that the crowd bravely suffered the firing. If that is proved to be the case, I for one will rejoice over the loss of life. It is the necessary price paid for gaining liberty.

## THE STATES AND RESPONSIBILITY

“.....Let the people of the States recognize that their salvation depends wholly on their own strength, whose generation in turn depends upon an exhibition in action of complete non-violence and truth.”

The partial success of the people of Mysore, instead of liberalizing the other States, seems, so far as one can conclude from known facts, to have stiffened them against the movement for internal responsible government. I have called the Mysore success only partial, for nothing has yet been gained in substance by the people. The Maharaja and his cultured Dewan have recognized the State Congress, they have instituted an impartial inquiry into the recent tragic happenings and appointed a Reforms Committee with ample powers. With patience and reasonableness on the part of the Mysore State Congress, and with real good-will and understanding on the part of the Mysore Government, we may see a large measure of, if not full, responsibility in the government of Mysore.

But the psychological effect of the Mysore events has been exceedingly great. The people of the States have begun to see a new vision of liberty. What seemed to them to be a distant goal, now appears to be an event to be realized almost in no time. I believe that if the awakening among the people is genuine and wide-spread, no repression can possibly stay their inevitable march to their cherished goal.

Let the people of the States recognize that their salvation depends wholly on their own strength, whose generation in turn depends upon an exhibition in action of complete non-violence and truth. They must realize that it is utterly impossible openly to organize along violent lines large masses of mankind deprived of arms, and almost from time immemorial brought up as a non-military nation.



## A ONE-SIDED INQUIRY

“As *satyagrahis*, the members of the Mysore Congress were not interested in the guilty parties being condemned. They were interested in the truth being known. The golden lid of the one-sided inquiry covers the truth. But they should have the faith that the lid will be lifted one day and the truth will be found.”

I had hoped that I would not have to say anything on Justice Nagesvara Iyer's report into the allegations of ill-treatment of *satyagrahi* prisoners in Mysore. But the Press criticism of the action of the State Congress in abstaining from participation in the inquiry demands an explanation from me. If it was wrong for the State Congress not to participate in the inquiry, the blame was mine. The inquiry was a result of Mahadev Desai's visit to Mysore, at the instance of the Dewan, and the former's confidential report to me of which a copy was given to the Dewan. Mahadev Desai had recommended an open judicial inquiry, presided over by a judge of known integrity brought from outside. Instead, there was only a departmental inquiry by a Mysore judge. I have been for some time guiding the Mysore Congress, and the Congress acted upon my advice in not leading evidence before a Mysore judge who could not, I felt, be wholly impartial in judging the conduct of officials with whom he must have come in close official contact. It was too much to expect an impartial scrutiny by one who had risen to the rank of a judge from being a Government official.

The allegations were of a most serious character, and they were repeated in the presence of Mahadev Desai and before officials occupying the positions of Deputy Commissioner, District Superintendent of Police, Superintendent of Jail and so on. Those who made the allegations were volunteers, not criminals, and a few of

them held high social positions. It is impossible to treat them as liars, as the report seems to have done.

I am not yet in possession of the Judge's report. What I have before me is a highly tendencious summary of the report published by Government, interspersed by Government's own statements of certain happenings and Justice Nagesvara Iyer's comments on them in his report. It passes comprehension that the inquiry was continued when the complainants refused to appear before the officer. The Judge should have dismissed the case for want of evidence. How he could have arrived at definite conclusions, in the absence of material evidence, it is difficult to say. The Judge admits that 'most of the persons who made accusations of assault and torture did not attempt to establish those charges', but that he 'had a large volume of oral and documentary evidence' adduced before him. What this 'documentary' evidence was, we do not know. The oral evidence was of people who had nothing to do with the inquiry, but were dragged by the police before the Judge to prove the Government case. The Judge says he has based his conclusions 'on such materials and broad probabilities.' This is hardly the language of a judge. No judge of integrity and impartiality would have cared to go into the extraneous evidence that Justice Nagesvara Iyer went into, and made uncalled for animadversions against *satyagrahis* for refusal to give evidence before him, when he knew that their reason in doing so was that they questioned the competence, independence and impartiality of the judge. Two paragraphs in the *Communiqué* are devoted to proving that the leaders of the movement adopted questionable methods of sending out surreptitious letters from jails. What this has to do with allegations of torture, one is at a loss to know. It would thus appear that, far from the inquiry being into any allegations by Congressmen, it became an inquiry into allegations by Government officials, which the judge has supported without giving those against whom the allegations were made an opportunity to rebut them.

My point, however, in referring to the unfortunate inquiry is that the Mysore Congress acted under my advice.

The Judge's biased finding confirms me in the soundness of the opinion I gave them. As *satyagrahis*, the members of the Mysore Congress were not interested in the guilty parties being condemned. They were interested in the truth being known. The golden lid of the one-sided inquiry covers the truth. But they should have the faith that the lid will be lifted one day and the truth will be found. The exoneration of the officials may result in the hardening of their hearts and greater maltreatment of the prisoners than before. If such is the case, the prisoners should rejoice in their sufferings and know that if they bear them without malice, they will bring the local Congress nearer its goal.

## MYSORE LAWYERS

"Let them (Mysore lawyers) remember Thoreau's saying that possession of riches is a crime and poverty a virtue under an unjust administration. This is an eternal maxim for *satyagrahis*."

Several Mysore lawyers, who had taken part in the Mysore *satyagraha* struggle, have been disbarred by the Mysore Chief Court. The last victim is Shri H. C. Dasappa, a most respected Mysorean and a practitioner of twenty years' standing. Serious as the disbaring of a member belonging to a liberal profession must be, such cases have happened before now on insufficient or purely political grounds. Such injustices have to be borne with resignation and fortitude. But the order of the Chief Judge in Shri Dasappa's case, as reported in *The Hindu*, has made for me most painful reading. Shri Dasappa had the hardihood to defy a magistrate's order not to address meetings in a part of Mysore, and had the equal hardihood under my instructions to advise *satyagrahi* prisoners to boycott the departmental inquiry by Justice Nagesvara Iyer. For these grave offences, Shri Dasappa has been disbarred for ever. He will be reduced to penury, if the Judges could help it and if their verdict has any potency beyond the paper on which it is written. Shri Dasappa becomes a man without a character to be despised and shunned by society. I happen to know Shri Dasappa personally. I hold him to be a man of spotless character and unimpeachable honesty. He has been manfully striving to practise non-violence to the best of his ability. He has done what many patriot lawyers or no lawyers have done in British India. And now-a-days the Judges take no notice of their conduct, and the public have made of them heroes. Advocate Bhulabhai has been Advocate-General of the Bombay High Court. He

has defied laws. So has Advocate Munshi, and so has Chakravarti Rajagopalachari. They have not been disbarred. Two of them have been Ministers in their Provinces. Public inquiries have been boycotted before now with impunity. Neither the honour nor the character of those who have brought about such boycotts has been impugned. In my opinion, the Judges of the Mysore Court have forgotten themselves in delivering their judgment. Shri Dasappa has not suffered. He will rise in the estimation of the people of Mysore. But I make bold to say the Mysore Judges have suffered by allowing themselves to be carried away by prejudice.

Such travesty of justice has happened before now. A Durban Magistrate who was carried away by some stupid prejudice had condemned an innocent man. His judgment was reversed, and the Supreme Court condemned it in such scathing terms that the Magistrate had to be removed. The Judges of the martial law days in the Punjab were not removed, but many were thoroughly disgraced because they had pronounced judgments which could not be supported by evidence before them. This Mysore judgment is worse than the Punjab judgments. Then, there was panic. Murders had been committed by the mob, and eminent men were tried not by ordinary courts, but by martial law tribunals. In Mysore, nothing of the kind has happened. The Chief Judge's order is a cool and calculated attack on the honour of a man who could not defend himself against reckless statements from the Bench. Judges sometimes forget, as these Mysore gentlemen have done, that there is the bar of public opinion which is no respecter of persons.

My condolence and pity go out to the Judges who have delivered a judgment which, let me hope, in their cooler moments, they will regret. For Shri Dasappa and his colleagues who have been disbarred, I have nothing but congratulations. I would ask them to turn the punishment into a blessing. It is well that they cannot appear before Judges who can be so grossly prejudiced, as the Mysore Judges have proved themselves to be. Let these lawyers be proud of their poverty which will be

probably their lot now. Let them remember Thoreau's saying that possession of riches is a crime and poverty a virtue under an unjust administration. This is an eternal maxim for *satyagrahis*. The disbarred lawyers have a rare opportunity of so remodelling their lives that they can always be above want. Let them remember that practice of law ought not to mean more taking daily than, say, a village carpenter's wage. Let them make redoubled efforts to produce such a state of affairs in Mysore that the travesty of the nature I have described may become impossible. It is no pleasure to me to have to write as strongly as I have done. But I could do no less, if I was to serve Truth.

## MYSORE JUSTICE

"My correspondent's complaint is right. But Judges are above all law, at least in Mysore. Like kings, they can do no wrong."

After I had sent my note on Shri H. C. Dasappa's case for publication, I received the following from a Bangalore advocate :

"You have now material which is sufficient to give an indication of the independence of the Mysore Judiciary. It is undoubtedly under the control and lead of Sir D'Arcy Reilly. The other Judges in the High Court follow in his foot-steps, and no single instance can be recalled when any Puisne Judge of the High Court of Mysore has had the strength to demur to even the excesses committed by the Chief Justice in the language, form and tone of his judgments. The Government, which professes not to interfere with either the High Court or the Judiciary, is evidently well satisfied about the Judges of the High Court of Mysore. For a dozen years, important judgments have come from the Judges of the High Court which have clearly shown that they have yielded to the pressure of the bureaucracy, while professing fear of God and of no man. Probably, it is this practical docility that has made the Government Order on Political Reforms in the State silent to the point of being sinister as regards recommendations for the reform of the Judiciary in the State. To cap all, comes the pronouncement in Shri H. C. Dasappa's case that 'in this country truth is so often degraded into a political catch-word.' The reference to the country is wide enough in its mischief and implication so as to embrace all people, whether Congressmen or others, and whether they reside in the States or in British India. What basis had Sir D'Arcy Reilly for such an assumption? And what evidence had he for such a general charge against a whole country? Is it moral on the part of Sir D'Arcy Reilly to condemn Shri H. C. Dasappa and debar him on the ground that he preferred a charge that he could not prove, and do the same thing under a different guise in a judgment?"

My correspondent's complaint is right. But Judges are above all law, at least in Mysore. Like kings, they can do no wrong.

## MYSORE

“As the struggle becomes wider and more earnest and more real, imprisonment is bound to be, as past experience teaches, increasingly hard to bear. Death for a brave and strong-willed man will, then, be a welcome relief.”

Reference has already been made in these columns about the Mysore Government's repressive measures against the State Congress. Now comes the news of a worse tragedy in the shape of a police charge at Bhadravati resulting in three deaths, including a child three years old, from firing by the police on an unarmed crowd. I do not wish to enter into the details. According to the Congress version, the whole tragedy arose out of a peaceful labour demonstration. There is a suggestion on the Government side that the firing had to be resorted to, because the crowd had attacked the police station in Bhadravati. The President of the Congress denies the charge and demands an inquiry. It will be worthless, unless it is admittedly impartial. If the crowd had attacked the police station, what was the cause? If the crowd was non-violent, was the firing a mere wanton awe-inspiring process? In either case, the people must learn the art of being killed, and if they are non-violent, without any reason therefor save for their love of liberty. It is a duty, then, to face death as cheerfully as we face imprisonment. Indeed, I do not know that such a swift ending is not more welcome than the prolonged agony that jail life sometimes becomes. As the struggle becomes wider and more earnest and more real, imprisonment is bound to be, as past experience teaches, increasingly hard to bear. Death for a brave and strong-willed man will, then, be a welcome relief.



## ‘ALWAR ATROCITIES’

“It must be frankly admitted that the Congress possesses no authority for enforcing its will in Indian States, even to the extent it does in British India proper. Prudence, therefore, dictates inaction where action would be waste of effort, if not folly.”

What has been known as ‘Alwar Atrocities’ came before the Congress Working Committee that met in Calcutta, in the form of a motion by Shri Jamnalal Bajaj for the appointment of a committee of inquiry. Now, it has been long a tradition of the Congress not to interfere in the internal affairs of Indian States. The members of the Committee felt that it was a healthy tradition which it would be unwise to break. Shri Jamnalalji, then, did not press his motion. I told him, however, that I should discuss the question in these pages and give my reasons for my personal opinion that the Congress should not interfere in the internal administration of the Indian States. This may, if one chooses to put it so, be regarded as a virtue of necessity or a matter of policy. It is both and, perhaps, a little more. It must be frankly admitted that the Congress possesses no authority for enforcing its will in Indian States, even to the extent it does in British India proper. Prudence, therefore, dictates inaction where action would be waste of effort, if not folly. But if inaction is prudential, it is also benevolent. The Congress seeks not to embarrass the States, it desires to help them. It does not wish to destroy them, it wishes to reform them. And this the Congress for the moment does by abstention as an earnest of its good-will.

But abstention by the Congress does not mean absence of effort on the part of Congressmen. Those who have any relation with the States will no doubt use their influence. The local committees can help and

guide the distressed people so long as they do not come in clash with authority. Nor does the Congress regulate or control the action of individual Congressman. But when they take action, they do so not as Congressmen. The position of the Congress must not be compromised.

May the subjects of Indian States, then, expect no relief from the Congress which claims to be a national institution? I fear the answer must be partly in the negative. They may not expect any direct assistance. But indirect assistance they do get. For, to the measure that the Congress becomes powerful and efficient, to that measure also is levelled up the condition of the subjects of the Indian States. The moral pressure of the Congress must be felt all over the land, either directly or indirectly. I hope, therefore, the afflicted people will realize that if the Congress does not offer any direct help, it is not for want of will, but it is entirely due to want of ability and opportunity.

## MY INCAPACITY

“Arbitrary procedure is an attribute of autocracy, whether it be Hindu or Mussalman. We must devise means of checking autocratic vagaries without seeking to destroy the Indian States. The remedy is cultivation of enlightened and forceful public opinion.”

It would be most comfortable for my pride, if I could give every applicant for help the satisfaction he may desire. But here is a sample of my hopeless incapacity. ‘Of what use is your leadership or *Mahatmaship*, if you cannot stop cow-killing by asking the Mussalmans to stop it? Look at your studied silence on the Alwar atrocities and your criminal silence about the affront put by the Nizam upon Panditji<sup>1</sup> whom you delight to call your respected elder brother and one of the first among the public servants and whom you have yourself acquitted of any malice against Mussalmans.’ Thus have argued not the same but several persons. The first rebuke mentioned was the last to be received and it has proved the proverbial last straw. There is a telegram before me, asking me to request the Mussalmans not to kill cows as sacrifice on Bakr-Id. I thought it was time for me at least to offer an explanation over my silence. I was prepared to live down the charge regarding Panditji, although it was a charge brought by a dear friend. He was almost apprehensive about my fame. He thought I would be accused of fear of Mussalmans and what not. But I was firm in my resolve not to take any public notice of the ban on Panditji. There was no fear of his misunderstanding me. And I knew that he stood in no need of my protection. He will survive all the bans that can be declared against him by any temporal power. His

<sup>1</sup> Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviyaji.

philosophy is his stay. I have watched him at close quarters amid many a crisis. He has stood unmoved. He knows his work and prosecutes it without elation or perturbation, in fair weather or foul. I, therefore, laughed to my heart's content when I heard of the ban. Strange are the ways of potentates. Nothing that I could write in the pages of *Young India* would, I knew, induce H. E. H. the Nizam to recall his fiat. If I had the honour of a personal acquaintance, I would have straightway written to the Ruler of Hyderabad respectfully telling him that the ban on Panditji could do no good to his State, much less to Islam. I would have even advised him to offer Panditji his hospitality when he went to Hyderabad, and could have cited such examples from the lives of the Prophet and his companions. But I do not possess that honour. And I knew that a public reference by me might not even reach his ears. Save, therefore, for adding to the acerbity already existing, it could have served no purpose. And as I could not add to it, even if I could not diminish it, I chose to be silent. And my present reference I propose to use for the sake of advising such Hindus as would listen to me not to feel irritated over the incident nor to make it a cause of complaint against Islam or Mussalmans. It is not the Mussalman in the Nizam that is responsible for the ban. Arbitrary procedure is an attribute of autocracy, whether it be Hindu or Mussalman. We must devise means of checking autocratic vagaries without seeking to destroy the Indian States. The remedy is cultivation of enlightened and forceful public opinion. The process must begin, as it has begun, in British India proper; because it is naturally freer being administered directly, unlike the States which are administered through the vassals of the Emperor. They, therefore, reproduce the evils of the British system without containing the few safeguards that direct British administration provides for its own sake. In the States' India, therefore, orderliness depends more upon the personal character and whims of the Chiefs for the time being, than upon the constitution or rather the constitutions under which the States' government is regulated. It follows, therefore, that real reform of the States

can only come when the chilling control of the British imperial system is at least tempered by the freedom of British India, secured by the disciplined power of the people. Not that, therefore, all the journals have to observe silence. Reference to abuses in the States is undoubtedly a necessary part of journalism, and it is a means of creating public opinion. Only, my scope is strictly limited. I have taken up journalism not for its sake, but merely as an aid to what I have conceived to be my mission in life. My mission is to teach by example and precept under severe restraint the use of the matchless weapon of *satyagraha*, which is a direct corollary of non-violence and truth. I am anxious, indeed I am impatient, to demonstrate that there is no remedy for the many ills of life save that of non-violence. It is a solvent strong enough to melt the stoniest heart. To be true to my faith, therefore, I may not write in anger or malice. I may not write idly. I may not write merely to excite passion. The reader can have no idea of the restraint I have to exercise from week to week in the choice of topics and my vocabulary. It is a training for me. It enables me to peep into myself and make discoveries of my weaknesses. Often, my vanity dictates a smart expression or my anger a harsh adjective. It is a terrible ordeal, but a fine exercise to remove these weeds. The reader sees the pages of *Young India* fairly well-dressed-up, and sometimes, with Romain Rolland, he is inclined to say: 'What a fine old man this must be!' Well, let the world understand that the fineness is carefully and prayerfully cultivated. And if it has proved acceptable to some whose opinion I cherish, let the reader understand that when that fineness has become perfectly natural, *i.e.*, when I have become incapable of evil and when nothing harsh or haughty occupies, be it momentarily, my thought-world, then, and not till then, my non-violence will move all the hearts of all the world. I have placed before me and the reader no impossible ideal or ordeal. It is man's prerogative and birth-right. We have lost the paradise only to regain it. If it takes time, then it is but a speck in the complete time-circle. The Divine Teacher of the Gita knew when he said that millions of our days are equal to

only a day of *Brahma*. Let us not, therefore, be impatient and in our weakness think that non-violence is a sign of soft brains. It is not.

But I must hasten to the end. The reader knows now why I have been silent about Alwar. I have no data to go upon. Alwar can laugh with as much disdain as the Nizam at anything I may say or write. If all the reports that are published are true, they are proof of Dyerism double distilled. But I know that I have for the moment no remedy. I watch with admiration the effort of the Press to secure at least a decent public inquiry into the awful allegations. I note the silent movement of Panditji's diplomacy cutting its gentle way. Why need I bother, then? Let those who appeal to me for prescriptions know that I am not an infallible *Kaviraj* with an inexhaustible pharmacopœia. I am a humble, groping specialist with hardly two indistinguishable drugs in my little pocket. The specialist pleads present incapacity to deal with the evils complained of.

And to the lovers of the cow, have I not already said that I no longer profess, as I did only a short time ago, to claim any influence over Hindus or Mussalmans? Till I have regained it, *Go-mata* will forgive her humble child that I claim to be. My life is wound up with hers. She knows I am incapable of betraying her. But she understands my incapacity, if her other adorers do not.

## ‘HYDERABAD COMMUNIQUÉS’

“The doctrine of minority is a good hobby to ride up to a point. But it must be, at least numerically, a fair minority. Even a minority of one can expect perfect justice. But it has no status in the political field.”

The Hyderabad *Communiqués* have come upon me as a painful surprise. Sir Akbar is a great educationist. He is a philosopher. It was a pleasure to read his recent Convocation Address to the Dacca University. It is passing strange that he should have lent himself to the reactionary declarations which condemn an organization even before it has begun to function. What can be the meaning of communalism in a State which is overwhelmingly one population according to religion? What can communalism mean in, say, Kashmir or the Frontier where the population is predominantly of one faith? The doctrine of minority is a good hobby to ride up to a point. But it must be, at least numerically, a fair minority. Even a minority of one can expect perfect justice. But it has no status in the political field. When a person belonging to an insignificant minority mounts to power, he does so, not as a representative of his group, but by sheer merit. The State Congress in Hyderabad can never be communal in the sense in which the word is understood in India. An institution in the Frontier Province need not be dubbed communal, merely because it has no Hindu member. Of course, an organization may be frankly communal in outlook. But the Hyderabad *Communiqués* make a subtle distinction and aver that there is presence in the State Congress of persons predominantly communal in outlook. What is more, the State Congress has come out with a statement totally repudiating the suggestion of communalism.

## HYDERABAD

“*Satyagraha* is not a simple affair. It is a way of life. It requires discipline. It demands infinite patience and capacity for uttermost suffering.”

Hyderabad State Congress people are getting restive. As they have been acting under my advice, some of them came to me and said:

“We have suspended civil disobedience at your and other leaders’ instance. You had held out the hope that, if we suspended civil disobedience, most probably the prisoners would be released and the State Congress recognized. Neither the one, nor the other has happened. How long are we to remain out and vegetate while our co-workers are rotting in the State jails, where life is none too easy? What will you have us do?”

As these friends have to deal with a large number of colleagues, I had better give a summary of my answer to them. I said:

“I sympathize with you. In your place, I should feel like you. But *satyagraha* is not a simple affair. It is a way of life. It requires discipline. It demands infinite patience and capacity for uttermost suffering. Civil disobedience, which is but a phase of *satyagraha*, has to be suspended even though colleagues may have to suffer imprisonment, hardships attendant upon jail life, and even worse. And they have to do all this with good grace, joyfully and without malice towards those who are responsible for subjecting them to such suffering. Remember, too, that a true *satyagrahi*, being outside, goes through greater mental suffering than the one who has gone behind prison bars. The latter has done his task for the time being. His mind is free. He fulfils his immediate mission if he behaves like a model prisoner, and cheerfully submits to the sufferings he might have to go through. Whereas the former has to bear the brunt of managing the struggle,



thinking out plans and responding to the programme as it may be given from day to day.

"I have to ask you to prolong your suspension, if only for the simple and decisive reason that two bodies are offering civil disobedience for purposes wholly different from yours, however worthy their purpose may be. The Arya Samaj civil disobedience is purely religious, in the sense that it is being offered for the vindication of the exercise of their religion. The Hindu Mahasabha is, I suppose, supporting the Arya Samaj. And, therefore, the struggle has assumed a communal colour. If you resume civil disobedience, it will be very difficult for you to retain your nationalistic character. You will expose yourselves to needless suspicion. Your methods, too, may not be identical with theirs. You will create an embarrassing situation without advancing your cause.

"Thus, the situation demands delicate handling. It is my conviction that your restraint will largely disarm suspicion, and to that extent you will be making a definite advance towards your goal. Meanwhile, I can give you the assurance that whatever friendly offices can do, is being and will continue to be done. Having heard my argument, you will act as may seem best to you. You must reject my advice, if it does not appeal to your head and heart. If you accept it, remember that every member will be expected to devote himself whole-heartedly to the constructive programme as I have explained it to you."

## THE ARYA SAMAJ

“The country knows that I have a special way of dealing with things, public or private. Some even call it quixotic. Thus, my public silence over the Arya *satyagraha* did not mean that I was not deeply interested in the struggle.”

It was a happy ending to the Arya *satyagraha*. I have hitherto not written a word about this struggle. The matter seemed too delicate for public treatment by me. The country knows that I have a special way of dealing with things, public or private. Some even call it quixotic. Thus, my public silence over the Arya *satyagraha* did not mean that I was not deeply interested in the struggle. I was keeping myself in touch with both the Arya Samaj leaders and the Muslim friends who could have anything to do with Hyderabad affairs. Of course, I was acting in concert with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. My sympathies were with the Aryas, so far as their demands were concerned. They seemed to me to be so simple and so elementary. But I was averse to their *satyagraha* from my own standpoint which I had explained to them. I was, however, non-plussed when they suggested that it was no worse, if it was no better, than the *satyagraha* I had led. They must not be expected, they added, to appreciate and follow my new method or requirements. I saw that I had no right to put any pressure upon them beyond that of reason. Then, I was anxious not to embarrass H. E. H. the Nizam's Government as long as I could help it. It is, therefore, a matter of great joy to me personally that the Arya struggle has ended in a friendly manner. Both the Nizam Government and the Arya Sabha deserve congratulations. Let me hope that the dignified statement issued by Shri Ghan-shyamsingh Gupta will receive from the Aryas the response it deserves. There is no doubt that much bitterness has been engendered during the struggle. If the Aryas act

in the spirit of Shri Gupta's appeal, and the Nizam's Government in the spirit of their own *Communiqué*, the bitterness will die out and there never will be any occasion for resumption of the struggle, so far as simple religious and cultural freedom is concerned.

## A WISE STEP

"I am sure every activity that promotes co-operation among the people, their education and their economic and social uplift, brings them nearer their goal in a most solid manner one can think of."

The Hyderabad State Congress has had great difficulty in functioning. The State would not recognize it as a constitutional body so long as it continued to style itself Congress, although it has no affiliation with the Indian National Congress. The word is nobody's monopoly. It is a common word used by many organizations in the world. But, somehow or other, the National Congress has become anathema in many States. Therefore, the word itself has become suspect in Hyderabad. The matter was referred by the leaders to me, and I had no hesitation in advising them that there was no virtue in merely fighting for the name, if their lawful activities were not otherwise interfered with. The leaders, after correspondence with the authorities, have acted according to my advice and adopted the name Hyderabad National Conference. Thus, all's well that ends well. I hope that the Conference will concentrate on the many constructive activities that are healthful and necessary for mass uplift and consciousness. They should find the authorities co-operating wholeheartedly with them in such work. Their goal of responsible government under the aegis of H. E. H. the Nizam remains the same as before. I am sure every activity that promotes co-operation among the people, their education and their economic and social uplift, brings them nearer their goal in a most solid manner one can think of.

## HYDERABAD STATE

“The recent release of the *satyagrahis* loses all grace if the ban on the State Congress is not removed.”

Swami Ramananda Tirtha of the banned State Congress has issued the following sober statement:

“Some of the workers of the Hyderabad State Congress, which was banned on 2nd March 1940, offered individual *satyagraha* in the month of September 1940 under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi. The Government of H. E. H. the Nizam released them unconditionally on 16th December 1941. Immediately after the release, I issued a statement saying that, though the Government had released us, it did not remove the aforesaid ban. It seemed to us, therefore, that it was incumbent upon us to continue the *satyagraha* till our demand for lifting the ban was conceded by the Government. After our release, we consulted Mahatmaji and explained to him the present situation in Hyderabad State and our own point of view. Taking into consideration the present critical phase of the War, he advised us to abstain from re-offering *satyagraha* at this hour, and directed us to concentrate our energies wholly on the constructive programme. We have, therefore, decided to faithfully follow Mahatmaji's advice. We more and more appreciate the vital importance of the constructive programme and its potentialities. We, therefore, appeal to the people in general, and workers in particular, to devote their energies to this programme. We may not even seem to embarrass H. E. H.'s Government at this critical juncture. This suspension, however, does not mean any alteration in our goal, which is the attainment of responsible government under the aegis of H. E. H. the Nizam and the Asafjahi Dynasty.”

How I wish the Government of H. E. H. the Nizam would remove the ban. They cannot wish to prevent the people from carrying on a constitutional movement in favour of responsible government under the aegis of H. E. H. the Nizam. The recent release of the *satyagrahis* loses all grace if the ban on the State Congress is not removed.

## HYDERABAD

“If you ask me in advance whether I would face anarchy in preference to foreign orderly rule, either British or any other, I would unhesitatingly plump for anarchy, say, the rule of the Nizam supported by Chiefs become feudatory to him or supported by the border Muslim tribes. In my estimation, it will be cent per cent domestic. It will be home rule though far, far from self-rule or *swa-raj* (स्व-राज).”

“What do you say to the right of Hyderabad to the territories that have been taken away by the English under some pretext or other, e.g., Berar, Ceded Districts, Karnatak, etc.?”

This question demands an answer. So far as they have been taken away by the English, the right accrues against the English. If I am asked as a matter of equity, I can only say that the people of the respective parts should be asked to make their choice. That is the only equity I know.

But I suggest that all such discussion is academic. If India, the geographical unit, gets independence, as it must some day, it means that every component part has its independence. If independence is won non-violently, all the component parts will be voluntarily interdependent, working in perfect harmony under a representative central authority, which will derive its sanction from the confidence reposed in it by the component parts. If independence is taken by force of arms, then, the strongest power will hold sway over all India. And this may be Hyderabad for aught I know. All the big and the petty States will be free willy-nilly from the British yoke. They will each fight for their existence and succumb to the strongest who will be the Emperor of India. This presupposes unarmed millions lying prostrate at the feet of the combination of armed States. Many other things are, however, conceivable. The Indian part of the British army will probably have consciousness of strength and an independent existence.

There may be Muslim arms, Sikh arms, Gurkha arms, Rajput arms and what not. They may fight among themselves or, having allied themselves to some nationalist party, may present a united front to the Princes. There may also be the descent upon India of the warring tribes from the Frontier, to share the spoils or the sovereignty itself.

The Congress, if it still has anything of its non-violence left in it, will die in the attempt to establish universal peace in India. It is not impossible that all the warring elements will find it profitable, in more ways than one, voluntarily to surrender themselves to the moral authority of a central power. This means universal suffrage, exercised by a disciplined and politically intelligent electorate. It also means a decent and permanent burial to communal and other discord.

But this may not happen. The existing state of things does not warrant an optimistic outlook. But I am a man of faith. And to faith, all things are possible. But supposing the worst happens and there is anarchy in the land. If there is God upon earth, as He is in heaven, then, you may depend upon it that I shall not live to make any choice. I shall die in the anarchic flame, whilst I am vainly attempting to still it with my tiny shaky hands. But if you ask me in advance whether I would face anarchy in preference to foreign orderly rule, either British or any other, I would unhesitatingly plump for anarchy, say, the rule of the Nizam supported by Chiefs become feudatory to him or supported by the border Muslim tribes. In my estimation, it will be cent per cent domestic. It will be home rule though far, far from self-rule or *swa-raj* (स्व-राज). But you must let me repeat that, while I can write thus academically, if the reality faces me, my choice will be death, or the rule of the people by the people for the people. This means the rule of unadulterated non-violence. So you see, my non-violence is made not of cotton-wool, but of a metal much harder than steel and yet softer than cotton-wool. You can compare it only with itself.

You will naturally, then, ask what place have the Princes in my scheme of things. Such a question should not arise if you had fully realized the implications of non-

violence. For the Princes, obeying the moral authority of a central body not sustained by arms, will find an honourable place as servants of the people. No one will have any rights but what are inherent in a willing performance of one's duties. Thus, H. E. H. the Nizam will, then, be the chosen servant of people. Only, then, his people will not be merely those confined willy-nilly within his present borders, but may be all India. You must not dismiss this as a utopian scheme. I claim to be a practical man. If the Congress proves true to its policy, what may seem to-day to be an airy nothing may to-morrow become an agreeable reality. In my scheme, there is no waste of either human talent or creative effort. Let me quote here my cable to H. G. Wells in reply to his on the Rights of Man:

"Received your cable. Have carefully read your five articles. You will permit me to say you are on the wrong track. I feel sure that I can draw up a better Charter of Rights than you have drawn up. But what good will it be? Who will become its guardian? If you mean propaganda or popular education, you have begun at the wrong end. I suggest the right way. Begin with a Charter of Duties of Man, and I promise the rights will follow as spring follows winter. I write from experience. As a young man I began life by seeking to assert my rights, and I soon discovered I had none—not even over my wife. So I began by discovering and performing my duty by my wife, my children, friends, companions and society, and I find to-day that I have greater rights perhaps, than any living man I know. If this is too tall a claim, then, I say I do not know any one who possesses greater rights than I."



## AUNDH REFORMS

“It is to be hoped that the noble example of Aundh will be copied by the other States, and that its people will by their conduct prove themselves in every way worthy of the responsibility that is to devolve on them.”

I congratulate both the Raja Sahab and the people of Aundh on the grant of responsible government. This small State has always been progressive. The Ruler of Aundh has but anticipated the wants of his people, and has even been in advance of them in social matters. The declaration of full responsibility was the natural result of the past acts of the Ruler. I hope that the rights conferred by the proclamation will not in any way be whittled down in drawing up the constitution. I would suggest that the privy purse should on no account exceed rupees thirty-six thousand. There should be a definition of fundamental rights, *i.e.*, equality of all in the eye of the law, abolition of untouchability, and liberty of speech. The last para of the proclamation is appealing. It truly says that “self-government implies self-control and self-sacrifice,” and adds that “in the new era that is coming to Aundh, and we hope to the whole of our country, the strong will serve the weak, the wealthy will serve the poor, the learned will serve the illiterate.”

It is to be hoped that the noble example of Aundh will be copied by the other States, and that its people will by their conduct prove themselves in every way worthy of the responsibility that is to devolve on them. The fact that in the heir to the *gadi* they have one who, from all accounts I have received, is a true servant of the people, must be a great help at the time of the inauguration of responsible government. The Western education received by him has not spoiled him. He is reported to be a votary of truth and *ahimsa*. He himself takes part in village

uplift, does road cleaning himself in common with other volunteers, and handles the spade and the basket with as much ease as they. He wields the pen. He takes pride in doing scavenging work, including the removal of night soil.

## AUNDH CONSTITUTION

"I have hitherto sworn by simple adult franchise, as well for the illiterate as the literate. My observation of the working of the Congress constitution has altered my opinion. I have come round to the view that a literacy test is necessary for two reasons. The vote should be regarded as a privilege and should, therefore, carry some qualification."

There are several startling things in the Aundh constitution. For the moment, I am concerned with only two things—the qualification for the vote and the courts of justice.

I have myself hitherto sworn by simple adult franchise, as well for the illiterate as the literate. My observation of the working of the Congress constitution has altered my opinion. I have come round to the view that a literacy test is necessary for two reasons. The vote should be regarded as a privilege and should, therefore, carry some qualification. The simplest qualification is a literacy test. And, if the ministry, appointed under the literacy franchise, is sincere and solicitous about the disqualified illiterates, the much desired literacy would come in no time. The Aundh constitution has made primary education free and compulsory. I have been assured by Appa Saheb that he will see that illiteracy is driven out from Aundh State inside of six months. I hope, therefore, that there will be no opposition in Aundh to the literacy test.

The second important departure from the ordinary practice is the making of justice in the lower court free and incredibly simple. What would, however, displease critics is not the freeness or the simplicity as such, but the abolition of intermediate courts and the fate of litigants and persons charged with offences being made to depend on a High Court presided over by one person. In a population of 75,000, a multiplicity of judges would be both unnecessary and impossible. And if the right type of person is

chosen as the Chief Judge, he is as likely to deal out unadulterated justice as a bench of highly paid judges. This simplification contemplates abolition of the cumbrous procedure and the use of tomes of law books, including hundreds of law reports used in British law courts.

## AUNDH

"I am sure everybody sympathizes with the Aundh people. Let those who have any to give send Appa Saheb their thoughts. Let them be sure that they are sound and relevant."

Who does not know little Aundh? Little it is in size and income, but it has made itself great and famous by its Chief having bestowed, unasked, the boon of full self-government on his people. Its Chief Minister, Appa Saheb Pant, has brought out an attractive pamphlet of nine pages describing the experiment, from which I reproduce the following:

"Village democracy is the basis of the new Constitution. Every village elects by the vote of all of its adults a *Panchayat* of five persons. One of these five is elected by the *Panchayat* unanimously as their president. If this unanimity is not possible, then all the adults of the village elect the president out of the *Panchayat*.

"Duly elected presidents of a group of villages constitute the *taluka Panchayat*. The *taluka Panchayat* decides in its meetings the way in which it would spend the money that it receives. It receives, as near as possible, half the revenue that is collected in that *taluka*. The villages prepare their budgets and present them through their presidents to the *taluka Panchayat*. These are discussed and a budget for the whole *taluka* is prepared. The villagers can spend the money they get as they think fit. As yet, education and public works constitute the chief items of expenditure.

"The members of the Assembly know not only about the affairs of the Central Government, but they are intimately connected with the every-day work in the villages, and they get acquainted with the work of other villages in their *taluka* at the meetings of the *taluka Panchayat*. The member of the Legislative Assembly, in this way, is an active worker almost 12 hours of the day. It is not that he stands for election, gets elected on certain issues, and does not worry about these till the next election. He has to face the villagers every day. The Constitution gives the power of recall to the villagers. 4/5ths of the voters can ask for a re-election of the *Panchayat*.

"The *Panchayats* dispense justice. The villager need not spend money, go out of his village, and spend days at the *taluka* town

to get a hearing. The *Panchayat* decides his case on the spot. The peasant can get witnesses in the village. And in the cases that are difficult and involve intricate points of law, a sub-judge comes to the village and assists the *Panchayat* with the dispensation of justice. The sub-judge not only gives expert advice to the *Panchayat*, but also acts as a guide to the peasant who, many a time, is completely ignorant of his legal rights and is, therefore, liable to be misguided by the vested interests—the *goondas*."

Justice in Aundh is, therefore, cheap, swift, and effective. In the *Panchayats* of two *talukas* alone, 197 criminal and civil suits have been disposed of. In 75 per cent of civil suits and 50 per cent of criminal cases, no pleaders were engaged. The witnesses had to be paid nothing, being themselves on the spot. There was thus great saving of time and money. Most cases were decided at a single sitting. The whole village turns out at the hearing of cases. Hence lying is rare, because it can be easily detected. Therefore, many cases are compromised out of court. This method of dealing out justice is itself great adult education.

There are 88 village schools for 72 villages. After the introduction of adult franchise, 35 per cent of the adult population received education. Basic education is not neglected, nor is physical. The Raja Saheb himself takes a keen interest in the physical development of his people. It is done through *Suryanamaskars*. It is a special style.

If Appa Saheb has shown the bright side of the experiment, he has not lost sight of the difficulties and troubles. I omit notice of these. For, they are the usual difficulties that attend all such experiments. The leaders of the people, if they retain their faith, will surely surmount them. This is how the pamphlet closes: "Little has been done. Much remains to be done. It's an important work we are doing. We want sympathy and advice."

I am sure everybody sympathizes with the Aundh people. Let those who have any to give send Appa Saheb their thoughts. Let them be sure that they are sound and relevant.

## VIOLENCE *v.* NON-VIOLENCE

“Violence like water, when it has an outlet, rushes forward furiously with an overwhelming force. Non-violence cannot act madly. It is the essence of discipline. But when it is set going, no amount of violence can crush it.”

Everywhere in India, there is a duel going on between the method of non-violence and that of violence. Violence like water, when it has an outlet, rushes forward furiously with an overwhelming force. Non-violence cannot act madly. It is the essence of discipline. But when it is set going, no amount of violence can crush it. For full play, it requires unsullied purity and an unquenchable faith among the leaders. Therefore, if non-violence seems to fail in the duel, it will do so because the leaders lack the purity or the faith or both. There seems, however, to be reason to believe that non-violence will triumph over violence. Things seem to be shaping so that the workers will see for themselves the futility of violence.

But a well-known public worker writes:

“The State method of dealing with *satyagraha* seems to be different from the British method. The methods adopted in some States are too inhuman and brutal. Will non-violence succeed against such brutal methods? Is it not permissible for us to defend the honour and respect of our women? The ordinary law of the land gives us that right. Then, why should we not exercise that right, when we are fighting such a brutal and inhuman machinery? I should like to be enlightened on these points.

“I have carefully read and re-read your views on the murder of the Political Agent of Orissa States.<sup>1</sup> I was rather pained to find

<sup>1</sup> *Most Unfortunate* : The murder of Major R. L. Bazalgette, the Political Agent of Orissa States, is most unfortunate and comes as a rude shock. I tender my sympathy to the bereaved family. I hope that the Subedar, who accompanied the deceased, will recover from the wounds. The Praja Mandal is expected to carry on the strictest investigation and find out the cause of the murder. It should be a warning

that you made no reference to the terrible atrocities committed on the poor State subjects of Orissa. Is not the murder of the Political Agent a divine warning to the States' authorities to be more merciful in dealing with the people's fights? After all, between the State subjects and the Political Department, who deserves our sympathy more? If the mob was wrong in using violence against the Political Agent, was the latter justified in firing on the mob and thus provoking them to violence? And what about the terrible repression for which the Political Agent was responsible? I agree with you that the murder of the Political Agent is unfortunate, but who is responsible for it? If the ruling Chiefs of Orissa had been properly advised and led by the Political Agent, and if he had not been party to the terrible repression, certainly the people would not have gone out of control.

"I agree with you that the event should be a warning to all of us who are conducting a mass movement in the State. But I fail to understand why you, as the greatest apostle of truth and non-violence, should not have also conveyed a warning to the Political Department of the Government of India, and especially the Eastern States Agency, that they should not adopt brutal methods in dealing with the States subjects' fights? I feel that the Eastern States Agency has been most brutal in dealing with the States subjects' fights, and the murder of the Political Agent is the climax of the brutal repression carried on by the Eastern States Agency. Indeed, it is unfortunate, but the Political Agent himself was responsible for this. And if we are to show sympathy for the loss of life of the Political Agent, what about the two persons who died on the spot as a result, possibly, of the police violence? If the victims of violence deserve our sympathy, why should not the victims of police violence deserve as much sympathy as the victims of mob violence? To me, it looks that the Bazalgette murder is a warning first and foremost to the Government of India and the Political Department and also to the Ruling Chiefs, and then to us."

Of course, the right of self-defence is there and so is the right of armed rebellion. But after deep deliberation the Congress has abjured both and that for valid reasons. Non-violence is not worth much, if it is worsted in the face of the greatest provocation. Its true test consists in its capacity for standing any amount of provocation. If

to all workers to be most careful in conducting mass agitations. They should realize that the slightest departure from non-violence is bound to harm the movement for freedom, whether in the States or all India—*Harijan*: Jan. 14, 1939.



there were eye-witnesses of the rapes and if the witnesses were non-violent, why are they alive? If the rapes became known after the event, of what use is violence? The non-violent method is still open. The men may be tried or they may be brought up before the bar of public opinion, if there was any. To expose the criminals to mob fury would be barbarity.

The argument about the murder of the late Political Agent of the Orissa States is irrelevant to the issue. I was not called upon to adjudge the merits of the action of the Ruler and the Political Agent on the one hand, and the people's action on the other. It was enough for me at the time to condemn in unqualified terms the murder of the Political Agent, not merely as a mark of sympathy, though that was deserved, but as an act of gross indiscipline and breach of the fundamental Congress policy. The misdeeds of the Rulers have been exposed often enough in these columns. But they have been mentioned not for the purpose of drawing the wrath of the people upon the doers, but for the sole purpose of showing the people the way of dealing with them non-violently. Things were shaping themselves well in Orissa. I can quote chapter and verse in support of this assertion. This murder has disturbed the even course of the movement. Ranpur is a howling wilderness. The people, both innocent and guilty, are in hiding. They have deserted their homes in order to escape repression. For, it will not be merely the actually guilty persons who will suffer. The technique of frightfulness, in some shape or other, is no doubt being applied, and the whole of India has to be helpless witness of it. The authorities know no other way of dealing with murders of their officials, especially when they are Europeans. The non-violent method has been slowly educating them to know the new way. But I need not prolong the argument. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Both methods are being tried out in India. The workers have to make their choice. I know that India's freedom is possible only through non-violence. Those workers in the Congress who think or act otherwise are wronging themselves and the Congress.

## THE STATES

“Meetings and processions are necessary for propaganda among ignorant masses. They are not necessary for a people awakened to a sense of their duty as citizens. *Swaraj* is for the awakened, not for the sleepy and the ignorant.”

The movement for liberty within the States is entering a new stage. History is going to repeat itself. Talcher and Dhenkanal have led the way in repression. It is no small matter that 26,000 out of 75,000 all told have migrated from Talcher to British Orissa. Prof. Ranga has published harrowing details of the sufferings of these refugees. His narrative is supported by Thakkar Bappa, the great social reformer and philanthropist, who responds to the call of distress no matter from what quarter it comes. They have been in exile for two months. I had hoped that they would have returned to their homes. But there seems to be no peace for these people as yet.

It is not possible for Orissa alone to tackle the relief work. The Government of Orissa has not much money to spare. I hope that the Marwadi Relief Society will take up the relief work, bearing in mind that labour should be found for the refugees.

Ranpur has murdered a Political Agent. And the police and military are having a merry time at the expense of innocent men and women. I hope the Government of Orissa will firmly handle the situation and not let the Imperial Power deal with the situation as it chooses. The Imperial Power loses its head when it loses one of its own class in the circumstances attending the unfortunate murder of Major Bazalgette. This murder should show us that there is nothing to be gained by the people by such acts.

Jaipur will not tolerate even the education of the Jaipurians to ask and fit themselves for responsible government and would presently bury alive one of its

foremost sons.

The advisers of the Thakore Saheb of Rajkot think nothing of making him eat his own words and commit a breach of his promise solemnly made to his people. The Resident of the Western States is party to this breach, if evidence in my possession is to be relied upon. To him, the Congress and the Sardar are anathema. Ground is being prepared in Rajkot for fomenting quarrels between Hindus and Muslims and the people in general and the Bhayats. None of these have hitherto quarrelled. It is to be hoped that the Muslims and the Bhayats will not prove enemies of their own deliverance. The reformer's course is clear. They must avoid all clash. They must be prepared to die at the hands of their own people, if the occasion arose. They have tried with marvellous success the weapon of non-violent non-co-operation. They can enforce it fully and simply sit still. The people are the paymasters, and the Prince and the officials are their servants who have to do the will of their masters. This is literally true of an awakened and enlightened people, who know the art of thinking and acting as of one mind.

I would urge the people in the other States to hasten slowly. Liberty is theirs, if they will have patience and self-restraint. Let them everywhere knit themselves together and have a consciousness of their strength. They should not have internal dissensions. They must know how to combat the maxim of irresponsibility—divide and rule. It is easy enough, if the reformers master the technique of non-violence.

Travancoreans had better be on their guard. I have sufficient evidence in my possession to show that attempts are being made to create divisions between Hindus and Christians and Ezhwas. If they are to have responsible government, they must forget that they are of these different communities. They must learn that they are one and indivisible political unit, and they must attain control over all forces of violence. They must take full responsibility for peace throughout Travancore without the aid of the police, if they are to win freedom through non-violent means. Meetings and processions are necessary for propaganda

among ignorant masses. They are not necessary for a people awakened to a sense of their duty as citizens. *Swaraj* is for the awakened, not for the sleepy and the ignorant.

## THE TRAGEDY OF TALCHER

"The interests of over 20,000 refugees living on sparse food and practically without shelter are at stake. Delay is not only dangerous, it is criminal."

The reader will recall the twenty to twenty-five thousand refugees of Talcher State in Orissa. They are living under great difficulties in the forests of Angul in British Orissa. I rely upon these figures because they are vouched for by Thakkar Bapa and Shri Harekrishna Mahtab. Both of them have a reputation to lose. Moreover, Thakkar Bapa is purely a humanitarian and social reformer of long standing. He does not dabble in politics.

Only a few days ago, it was announced in the Press that a settlement had been arrived at and that the refugees were about to return to their homes. This news was immediately contradicted and it was stated that the Raja of Talcher had refused to honour the pact entered into by Major Hennessey, Assistant Political Agent for Orissa States North.

This was the Pact signed on 21 March last:

"1. Reduction of the Miscellaneous Cess from 5 as. to 3 as. per rupee of rent, and an undertaking that, after the settlement to be started about next November, the combined rent and cesses will not be higher than the Angul rent and cesses with the same classes of land.

2. The abolition of Monopolies on the necessities of life except hides, skins, horns, *ganja*, opium, *bhang* and liquors.

3. State administrative machinery should not be used for enforcing fines, etc., levied by Ecclesiastical Courts and *Panchayats*.

4. Compulsory labour (*beths*) should be abolished except when necessary for public purposes, and then on payment of wages at ordinary rates.

5. The abolition of special taxes (poll tax) on industrial castes.

6. There should be no victimization of refugees on their return to the State.

7. Constitutional Reforms enabling the people to participate

in the administration through their representatives will be introduced as soon as the schemes are approved by the Political Department.

8. There shall be no interference with freedom of speech and meeting, provided that there is nothing subversive or disloyal to the Ruler or his administration in those speeches or meetings.

9. People should be allowed to kill wild animals in the State on their own property without any penalties or fees."

There were present at the time Major Hannessey, F.R.S.A., I.A., Bar-at-law, Major Gregory of the Military Intelligence Department, Shri Harekrishna Mahtab, Adjutant Woods of the Salvation Army, and the Revenue Commissioner representing the Orissa Government.

Major Hannessey, I understand from Thakkar Bapa, was quite confident that he had the authority of the Raja of Talcher to sign the pact. How the Raja can now refuse to endorse it is difficult to understand.

But the mystery deepens when one recalls the terms of the *sanad* under which the Raja holds Talcher. Here are the relevant clauses of the *sanad*, issued to the small Orissa States by the present Viceroy on 26th February 1937:

"3. That you shall do your utmost to suppress crime of all kinds in your State.

4. That you shall administer justice fairly and impartially to all alike.

5. That you shall recognize and maintain the rights of all your people and on no account oppress, or suffer them in any way to be oppressed, and that, in particular, you shall charge yourself personally with the welfare of the aboriginal population of your State.

6. That you shall act in accordance with such advice as may be given to you by the Agent to the Governor-General, Eastern States, or such other Political Officer as may be vested with authority in this behalf by H. E. the Viceroy."

Under clause 6 of the *sanad*, the Raja is bound to act in accordance with such advice as may be given to him "by the Agent to the Governor-General, Eastern States, or such other Political Officer as may be vested with authority in this behalf by H. E. the Viceroy."

The Raja has, therefore, no option but to carry out the wishes of the Assistant Political Agent. The question is, why is there all this delay in carrying out the pact? The

interests of over 20,000 refugees living on sparse food and practically without shelter are at stake. Delay is not only dangerous, it is criminal.

## TALCHER AGAIN

“Why is the Ruler being humoured by the Political Department in his wholly indefensible attitude ? Why is the welfare of several thousand refugees being lightly regarded ? Is not the prestige of the Paramount Power being used to sustain the admitted evils ? Surely, there is something radically wrong somewhere in all this.”

Talcher promises to be much worse than Rajkot. In Rajkot, it was the Ruler's word that was broken. In Talcher, it is the Paramount Power's. In Rajkot, the State atrocities were not the subject of scrutiny. In Talcher, the sorry condition of the numerous refugees is almost everything. Hence, delay is criminal and may mean loss of one year's crop to several thousand cultivators. The other relief promised by the Political Agent, Major Hannessey, relates to paltry things so far as the Ruler of Talcher is concerned; but they are serious enough for the people.

It has been whispered to me that I have been guilty of injustice to Major Hannessey, and hence to the Paramount Power, by attributing to them breach of promise for, it is said, Major Hannessey promised nothing, he merely undertook to convey to the Ruler the wishes of the people concerned. It is further said that even if it is proved that he made any such promise, he did so without authority.

I cannot admit either of the pleas. Major Hannessey signed the document without any reservations. Shri Harekrishna Mahtab describes the tragedy with a wealth of detail which compels conviction. He has been an eye-witness of the events narrated by him. So far as I am aware, Major Hannessey himself has never denied or has not been given an opportunity of denying the allegations made about him.

There seems to be no doubt that the Ruler of Talcher is in no mood to do justice to his people, unless he is made to according to the *sanad* I have already reproduced in these



columns. The representative of the Paramount Power can even require the smaller States of Orissa to perform acts in the interest of their people. Can there be any doubt as to the necessity of redressing every one of the injustices mentioned in the memorandum signed by Major Hannessey? Indeed, redress has been long overdue. Why is the Ruler being humoured by the Political Department in his wholly indefensible attitude? Why is the welfare of several thousand refugees being lightly regarded? Is not the prestige of the Paramount Power being used to sustain the admitted evils? Surely, there is something radically wrong somewhere in all this.

## UNTRUTH IN NEWSPAPERS

"I am quite clear that if newspapers weighed every word that is printed therein, we should have a speedier removal of abuses, whether in the States or elsewhere."

A State official writes:

"I have read your several articles in the *Harjan* about Congress activities in general, and those in the States in particular. One of these deals with corruption in the Congress ranks and, at least by implication, with other undesirable activities quite inconsistent with the spirit which you have tried to infuse into the mass of 'Congress workers.'

"It has occurred to me to draw your attention to the fact that much violence to truth and, therefore, harm to the cause you have at heart is being done by certain newspapers which live by abuse and which depend upon so-called 'Congress workers' for the unmitigated falsehoods they publish.

"So far as the States are the targets of attack, legitimate criticism, which rests on incontrovertible facts, must be wholesome and should be helpful. You would, however, agree that nothing but the truth should be published.

"What is happening, in fact, is that some people who nurse a sense of injury against the State to which they belonged or where they lived in the past, finding themselves driven away as a result of their activities to which the Governments of the States took objection, are trying to pay off old scores, and for such a purpose they imagine their position greatly fortified by their having joined the Congress fold. The papers they feed, in their turn, live by their diatribes, while for them those papers are the needed medium for the discharge of stored-up venom. The unfortunate result is that, however these vernacular papers may succeed in inflaming the uninformed public, responsible people remain unaffected by their denunciations.

"It is a pity that things that may be usefully brought to light in the honest spirit of awakening the administrations of the States to their responsibilities are, for want of knowledge, never published. What is published is either in the nature of a gross exaggeration of facts of no vital importance, or, as is more often the case, some pure invention and, therefore, an utter lie.

"Your present policy seems to me to be that where the people

desire to manage their own affairs, it is the duty of the Congress to help them in the attainment of that aim. I venture to think that it is not your policy to replace the contentment of the people with discontent, in pursuit of the ideal of responsible government throughout India.

"Above all, I take your policy to be to disseminate and propagate the truth, and to wage a ceaseless war against untruth. In that belief, I venture to suggest that an article or two in the *Harijan* on the responsibility of newspapers that depend for what they publish upon 'Congress workers' and that of those workers might help to purge the Congress movement of some destructive germs, and thereby make it more effective alike for the uplift of the down-trodden masses and for serving the highest cause of the country."

I have no difficulty in agreeing with the correspondent that newspapers which indulge in untruth or exaggeration harm the cause they profess to espouse. I admit, too, that there is enough untruth in enough newspapers to warrant action. But my experience is that no amount of public criticism will affect the policy of newspapers which make their livelihood by such policy.

I would like, however, to point out to my correspondent and others like him who are connected with States, that the public must not be blamed for believing untruths if the State officials, under a false sense of security, will not deign to correct untruths or render explanations. And, sometimes, when they condescend to give explanations, they are more untruthful than the untruths of the newspapers. The latest instance is that of Talcher. The Chief denied even the truth of a telling photograph in *The Statesman* of the refugees and has received a well-deserved snub from its Editor. I have a Talcher bulletin sent to me by Thakkar Bapa for me to laugh or weep over. Its denial is a shameful perversion of truth. I am publishing in this issue startling news about Mewar. I would like an authentic contradiction of the news, or strong action against the police if they acted in disregard of instructions. But I write this in no way to condone untruths in newspapers. I am quite clear that if newspapers weighed every word that is printed therein, we should have a speedier removal of abuses, whether in the States or elsewhere.

## MEWAR

"Civil resisters of the States should remember that the real battle has yet to come. The States, big or small, seem to be taking concerted action. They are copying the methods adopted by the British in British India during the *satyagraha* struggle, and are likely to improve upon them in frightfulness.....But civil resisters, who are worth their salt, will not be deterred by any frightfulness."

A correspondent sends the following business-like note:

"*First Incident:* Date of happening: 14th December, 1938. Place of happening: A way-side bridge in the British territory of town Deoli. Mewar territory: At a distance of about 12 yards.

"*Facts in brief:* In the afternoon of 14th December, Shri Mathura Prasad Vaidya, a worker of the Mewar Praja Mandal, who had been doing propaganda work at Deoli on behalf of the Mandal, while distributing Praja Mandal literature sitting at the bridge, was all of a sudden attacked by two constables of Uncha Police in Mewar. One of them snatched away the literature he had and burnt it to ashes there and then. The other knocked him down on the ground and then both of them forcibly dragged him in a semi-conscious state to the nearby territory of Mewar only at a distance of about 12 yards, where he was taken under arrest. Vaidya Mathura Prasad was severely beaten by those policemen on the way to Uncha police station. He has now been sentenced for nine months.

"*Second Incident:* Date of happening: 2nd February, 1939. Place of happening: On the outskirts of Deoli, British territory.

"*Facts in brief:* Shri Maniklal Varma, Secretary of the Mewar Praja Mandal, had gone to Deoli, a town in the British territory of Ajmer-Merwara, on the 2nd February, 1939, to confer with some workers there. In the evening, at about 6-30 p.m., he with four other colleagues of his was all of a sudden attacked on the outskirts of the town by 15 men of Mewar police with *lathis*. All the five persons were badly wounded, and Maniklalji was then forcibly dragged through bushes and thorns in a most inhuman way to the Mewar territory, which was at a distance of at least a few hundred yards. The Deoli police was informed during the mishap but no notice was taken, and the Dewan of the police station could not be found even after a good search, as if the whole thing was pre-arranged. Maniklalji was arrested and taken to the Uncha police station in Mewar."

The correspondent adds:

“Shri Maniklalji belongs to Bijolia. He has been devoting himself to the service of the peasantry for the past 20 years. He founded the Praja Mandal a year ago. But it was declared illegal within a few days. Therefore, he started civil disobedience some months ago. I send you these incidents as you have begun to write publicly about States’ affairs. Will you kindly guide us, workers, also what should be done in such circumstances?”

This news is strange, if it is true. It is difficult to understand why the police did not arrest these workers within the Mewar border. Or, was it that the workers’ friends were avoiding the Mewar territory? In any event, the arrests seem to me to have been illegal. The dragging amounted to an assault. The only advice I can give is that this is essentially a case for legal proceedings. The Praja Mandal should take it up.

But civil resisters of the States should remember that the real battle has yet to come. The States, big or small, seem to be taking concerted action. They are copying the methods adopted by the British in British India during the *satyagraha* struggle, and are likely to improve upon them in frightfulness. They fancy that they have no fear of public opinion, for there is none in the States except in rare cases. But civil resisters, who are worth their salt, will not be deterred by any frightfulness.

## QUESTION OF HONOUR

"In these days of awakening, all kinds of forces must rise up. Demands, even extravagant, will be made by new additions to the Congress. If they are in excess of Congress commitments, and if the Congress credit is to go up day after day, they must be checked."

On my way to Rajkot, going *via* Bombay, I have to wait a whole day for the Kathiawad Mail. I am passing the time in writing for *Harijan*. And I read the following note:

"Ramdurg—a small State in the Bombay-Karnatak area, 169 sq. miles, population 33,997, revenue Rs. 269,000—was hard hit by famine and scarcity conditions, and also depression due to fall in prices for some years past. On 20th March 1938, some agriculturists from villages gathered together in front of the palace and requested the Raja Sahib to grant some concessions in respect of land revenue. It was alleged, on behalf of those assembled at the palace, that they were dispersed by *lathi* charge by the Ramdurg police. On the other hand, these allegations were denied by the State authorities. It seems that no definite demands were made on behalf of the people, nor was there any organization to speak for them. Some time later, some of the people of the State approached Shri Yalgi, a Congressman and one of the Secretaries of the Karnatak Provincial Congress Committee, and requested him to visit Ramdurg and see the situation for himself. Accordingly, Shri Yalgi visited Ramdurg in April and advised the people there to organize a committee to place their demands before the authorities. In accordance with his advice, a body named Ramdurg Sansthan Praja Sangh was established, and on its behalf demands were formulated and submitted to the Raja Sahib.

"A Conference of Deccan States' people took place at Sangli on 22nd May, 1938, presided over by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. He left Sangli on the 22nd. But the Conference continued under the presidentship of Shri Gangadharrao Deshpande.

"On the 23rd, the question of Ramdurg was taken and it was decided that a Committee consisting of (1) Shri Gangadharrao Deshpande, President, K. P. C. C., (2) Shri Shankarrao Deo, Member of the Congress Working Committee, (3) Shri Munavalli, President, Ramdurg Praja Sangh, (4) Shri Kanabur, Secretary of

Deccan States People's Conference, (5) Shri Andaneppa Doddameti, M.L.A., (6) Shri K. S. Patil, M.L.A., (7) Shri Ari, Pleader, Hubli—a subject of the State, was appointed to investigate and report on the Ramdurg affair. In the meantime, the Ramdurg Durbar, on their own initiative, had issued a proclamation and announced certain concessions. But the people were not satisfied with these concessions and the agitation was assuming a serious turn. It must, however, be noted that, in spite of very serious provocations on the part of the rowdy element, the State authorities had absolutely taken no action which can be described as repressive.

“Then, on the 5th June, 1938, the Committee appointed at Sangli visited Ramdurg and instituted an enquiry. It was felt by the Committee and also by the prominent representatives of the Ramdurg Praja Sangh, that a mere enquiry and report would not serve the purpose. Therefore, the latter requested the Committee to bring about a settlement in respect of the demands which were submitted to the Ramdurg Durbar.

“The matter was discussed for two hours and on the 6th of June, Shri Deo was entrusted with the sole authority of settling the differences. Shri Deo, in accepting the responsibility, made clear to the people all the implications of what they were doing. Shri Deo, on behalf of the Committee, formulated the demands and submitted them to the Raja Saheb. After some discussions, the matter was postponed at the desire of the Raja Saheb. However, most of the suggestions, with slight modifications, were conceded by the Raja Saheb. Shri Deshpande wrote to the Sardar as to what had happened. He also informed him of the demands of the Praja Sangh and the offer of Raja Saheb. In reply, Sardar wrote to Shri Deshpande on the 11th June, 1938 to say that the terms offered by Raja Saheb could not be improved upon, that they were quite good, and that the people should be advised to accept them.

“Though Shri Deo was entrusted with full powers to negotiate and settle the terms, he on the 21st June 1938 took Shri Munavalli and all the members of the Managing Committee of the Praja Sangh into confidence, and after long discussion secured their assent to the terms settled between himself and the Raja Saheb. The members of the Committee appointed by the Sangli Conference, with the exception of Shri Shastri, who was absent, also agreed. The acceptance of the terms was communicated to the Raja Saheb. The same evening a *darbar* was held in the palace to which the President and representatives of the Praja Sangh and leading men of Ramdurg were invited. The Raja Saheb, in his opening speech, surveyed the history of his rule and gave the outlines of the terms of settlement. The Dewan, Rao Bahadur Pradhan, then read out the proclamation embodying the terms of the settlement. Thereupon, the President of the Praja Sangh, on behalf of the Sangh, thanked

the Raja Saheb in suitable terms. After the *darbar* was over, Shri Deo and others went to the public meeting. The meeting was attended by more than 12,000 persons. The President of the Praja Sangh presided. When Shri Gangadharrao Deshpande was explaining the terms of the settlement, a slight disturbance was noticed in one corner of the meeting. It was ascertained that they belonged to Sureban and were weavers. Shri Andaneppa Doddameti went to that corner and successfully tried to restore peace. After Shri Deshpande, Shri Andaneppa spoke for more than one hour and fully explained all the details of the terms and defended them very vigorously. He carried conviction to the audience and concluded his speech amidst enthusiastic cheers. Shri Deo also made a short speech, asking people to organize and strengthen their position by working the reforms granted. Shri Munavalli, the President, in his concluding speech, which was very touching, defended all the terms settled, and asked the audience whether they had confidence in him. The audience with one voice replied in the affirmative. He, then, asked them to accept the terms and they assented. At the conclusion of the meeting, a paper, containing the terms of the settlement, was brought to the President for his signature by an officer of the State. Shri Munavalli, the President, again asked the audience whether he should sign it, and with concurrence of not only the large audience but of the representatives of the Praja Sangh, signed the document.

"The Council of the Karnatak Provincial Congress Committee passed the following resolution:

"The Council congratulates the people of Ramdurg, Jamkhandi, Miraj Sr. and Jr. and Mudhol for the success they have achieved in their struggle for redress of their grievances, and trusts that they will strengthen their organizations by non-violent and peaceful means for the attainment of full responsible government in the near future.

"This Council expresses its sense of appreciation of the Rulers of the above States for readily responding to the demands of their subjects, and trusts that the terms of the settlement will be implemented by both the portions without delay. It also requests the Rulers of all the States in Karnatak to follow the liberal policy followed by the above-mentioned States.

"This Council, however, notes with extreme pain that anti-propaganda is being carried on by some people, and especially by some Congressmen, on the plea that the settlement arrived at by the efforts of prominent Congress leaders between the people and the Prince of Ramdurg. This Council, while requesting them not to carry on anti-propaganda, is definitely of opinion that the good of the people will advance only by standing by the settlement."

I have omitted some parts irrelevant for my purpose. It appears that an attempt is now being made on behalf of



the Ramdurg Praja Sangh to terrorize the Ruler into making further concessions. He refrains from taking action against the mischief-mongers for fear of losing Congress sympathy. The question I am asked is: "What are Congressmen involved in the settlement to do?" Assuming the correctness of my information, my unequivocal answer is that they have to keep at any cost the plighted word of the Provincial Committee. I am going to Rajkot to entreat H. H. the Thakore Saheb of Rajkot to keep his word. The breach, as I interpret his action, has shaken me to my depth. I can think of no other answer with regard to the Congress. Rajkot represents the Princely Order. Its shame or credit would be the shame or credit of the whole Order. If a representative Congressman breaks his word, the reputation of the whole Congress is at stake. How much more so, if a Provincial Congress Committee cannot redeem its word! The Congress claims to represent the whole nation. Its transactions must be above reproach.

In these days of awakening, all kinds of forces must rise up. Demands, even extravagant, will be made by new additions to the Congress. If they are in excess of Congress commitments, and if the Congress credit is to go up day after day, they must be checked. I do not know what the Ramdurg Praja Sangh claims. It may be that the claim is intrinsically sound. But they cannot enforce it by rowdiness and threats, even before the ink is dry on the settlement paper. The representative Congressmen in Karnatak have to stand by the Ramdurg Chief and see that the settlement is honoured by the people, even though in battling with them they should lose their lives.

## POPULAR VIOLENCE IN RAMDURG

"It has never been the Congress policy to plead provocation, howsoever grave, in justification of popular violence. We shall lose all, if we play with this fundamental provision of the Congress."

I have said not a word about Ramdurg up to now. I had a wire from Dr. Hardikar not to commit myself till I had heard from him. And Rajkot left me not a moment for any other work. I have only now on the train read the report prepared by Shris Divakar, Kaujalgi and Hardikar. I have also a revealing note from Shri Divakar. I have studied Shri Gangadharrao Deshpande's note on the tragedy. I had a visit from Shri Munavalli, President of the Praja Sangh, and Shri Magadi. The report of Shris Divakar, Kaujalgi and Hardikar is a dispassionate document and satisfactory in so far as it goes. This is its conclusion:

"In the end, we feel that the officers have acted tactlessly to a great extent and allowed the police to have their way. We believe that they could have controlled the situation, if they had acted a little more patiently and put the workers of the Praja Sangh on their honour as they had done many a time. But though there was provocation, we do not think that it was so great as to arouse the brute in man, and it must be laid at the door of the high inflammable temper of the people. They seemed to have readily believed the rumours and got infuriated.

"But there is absolutely no justification for any kind of violence, even under the greatest provocation. In fact, the greater the provocation, the greater is the opportunity and necessity for showing a non-violent spirit. That being our ideal, we cannot defend any slightest violence under any circumstances. The events only show that the Praja Sangh had no control over the forces of violence which were hiding in the people. It is a matter for the deepest regret, and this tragedy is sure to act detrimentally against all popular movements in States. It is a clear warning to all workers in the field, and every one must realize that before one feels sure that the people are rightly trained and disciplined in non-violence, it is unwise to begin any great mass movement."

A study of the evidence before me leads me to the conclusion that whatever the provocation, the popular fury was wanton, cruel and deliberate. Over two thousand villagers had collected with the set purpose of wreaking vengeance. They were intent upon releasing the President and the other prisoners. Congressmen cannot escape blame for the savagery of the people. The villagers were having the wrong lesson given to them. Ranpur in Orissa was the first finger-post. Ramdurg is the second. No one has denied the fact that the Raja Saheb of Ramdurg was a friend of the Congress. He deserved better treatment. I am not just now concerned with the truth or otherwise of the evidence on provocation. There are grave enough charges. But it has never been the Congress policy to plead provocation, howsoever grave, in justification of popular violence. We shall lose all, if we play with this fundamental provision of the Congress. I had remarked before the Ramdurg outbreak that I smelt violence in the very air I was breathing. I am very sensitive to the slightest exhibition of violence or untruth. They are twins.

I am quite clear that the Provincial Congress Committees, as well as the Working Committee when it is formed, must take strong measures to purge the Congress ranks of violence in thought, word and deed. What little I read of the public Press, shows that there is often a departure from truth and non-violence. How this evil can be remedied, I do not know. The Press managed or owned by Congressmen might be amenable to moral control. I am, however, inclined to think that the greatest mischief is done by Congressmen working in the villages. It ought not to be difficult to bring these under rigid discipline.

I suggest an impartial inquiry into the events. The Karnatak Provincial Congress Committee should entrust it to a High Court Judge. If the Raja Saheb will help, the task will be easy. But even if he does not, there should be no difficulty in getting at the truth.

There is another untoward result of the Ramdurg movement. It has taken a communal turn. There are two parties, Brahmin and non-Brahmin. My own feeling has hitherto been that Karnatak had remained fairly free from

the curse. But the cuttings and papers that have been sent to me show that the evil has gone deep enough to demand an immediate remedy. I have been asked to offer guidance in the matter. It would be presumptuous on my part to give any guidance without a proper study on the spot of the tension. I can only suggest that if there are enough Brahmins and non-Brahmins interested in removing the tension, they should tour the affected area, find out causes and deal with them. The tension is a symptom of the growing spirit of violence in the country.

## LAWLESS LIMBDI

“Let the *satyagrahis* know that salvation comes from within. They will have to lose all, if they will save their souls and gain the freedom which is their birth-right.”

Limbdi is a Kathiawad State. It had the reputation of being progressive. I have the good fortune to know many of its workers. They are wise, self-sacrificing and capable of doing hard work. In common with many States, Limbdi also had a great awakening among the people. The workers used to boast of their progressive Yuvraj. But they have now discovered that he has imbibed some curious notions of the dictatorships of the West. He would let the reformers have a free run of little Limbdi. But they must not go to the villages. In the villages, he was to make his own experiments unhindered by anybody. The Limbdi reformers thought that they had as much right as the Yuvraj to work among the villagers, especially as they had already established connection with them. They, therefore, dared to go to the villages with the result mentioned in the following telegram:

“At least eighty persons, armed with *lathis*, *dharias*, native guns, swords, axes, attacked village Pansina midnight fifth. Entrances of village were guarded by batches of three to five persons. Two batches of twenty persons went round village and selected houses of Praja Mandal workers and sympathizers for dacoity. First of all, they went to Praja Mandal office and chained it from outside so that volunteers cannot go out. Then, one batch went to house of Chhotalal, prominent merchant and Praja Mandal worker, and brutally assaulted him and his wife. She received serious injuries, including on her sex organs. President of local branch attacked with sword and received punctured wound in lungs. About thirty persons are seriously injured. Ornaments, cash, and goods worth about sixty thousand rupees taken away from ten to twelve houses of active members of Praja Mandal. Dacoits continuously carried on firing in air and at houses for about two hours. After this, they went to another village, Ralol, two miles away from Pan-

sina, and repeated process there. Three gold-smiths and one *bania* sympathizing with popular movement have been seriously wounded and property worth ten thousand rupees taken away. One *bania*, Jeychand Valji, attacked to-day with knife, stabbed at four places and plundered in Siani; his sister also beaten. People have strong grounds to suspect State officers' hand in dacoity. Some dacoits were identified as *pagis* and *pasayatas* of State. Praja Mandal workers and sympathizers were actually being threatened since last week by State *pagi pasayatas* that they will be robbed and beaten. Stolen property removed in about eight motor cars and two buses which could not have been supplied by private individuals. Dacoits continued firing in air for two hours, using number of cartridges which could not have been supplied by private individual. State police has not started any investigation as yet. Even *panchnamas* have not been made. No medical aid sent by State from capital. Thakore Saheb, even though approached, has not taken any strong action. Threats of similar dacoity are being given by State *pasayatas* in other villages. Previous incidents of *goondaism* strengthen this suspicion. Attacking Bhaktiba's car with *lathis* in Jambu by *Mukhi's* men, smashing Praja Mandal car and beating its driver and worker in Siani, beating members of Praja Mandal in village Raska, threatening head of volunteers in Siani by village *pasayata* with death, free movement of about thirty *goondas* with *lathis*, *dharias*, knives in Siani, and number of such incidents have left no doubt here that organized *goondaism* is started by State to suppress recently started popular movement. Attention of Thakore Saheb has been drawn to these incidents times without number, but in vain. As protest against last act of dacoity, about 400 to 500 persons, including *Nagarseib* Lalchandbhai and prominent citizens like Durlabhji Umedchand, Amulakh Amichand have started hunger-strike and are sitting day and night before Palace. About three thousand other persons have joined this morning. Great indignation prevails against State. People observing remarkably non-violent attitude and are prepared for any contingency."

They also dared to announce a meeting of their Parishad with the result embodied in the following message received by me:

"Sitting Praja Parishad arranged to-morrow. To break Praja Parishad many *goondas* imported Limbdi. People suspect hand of State officials in this. Strong grounds for this suspicion. Procession of *goondas* armed with *lathis*, naked swords, guns, *dharias*, marching through town for whole day. Some of these tried to assault certain women. Seth Amulakh Amichand, prominent merchant of Bombay, intervened and asked them to beat him rather than women. Seth Durlabhji Umedchand and Bhagwanlal Harakhchand rushed to scene with six male volunteers. Male volunteers

were brutally assaulted with sticks and beaten. At another place, *goondas* caught hold of Prahaladrai Modi, pleader of Bhavnagar, and released him only when they knew that he was not Praja Mandal worker. Bhogilal Gandhi was threatened with death by *goonda* armed with naked sword. Manubhai Thakkar was given one *lathi* blow. *Goondas* are shouting before Praja Mandal office. Batch of *goondas* headed by Tapubha of Siani, who is State servant and who beat Praja Mandal volunteers in Siani two days before, have stationed themselves outside Sthanakvasi *bhojanshala* where peasants from villages are sleeping. They threaten anybody who comes out with death. Different batches of *goondas* are marching streets. Practically, state of siege amounting to virtual martial law by State prevails. People feel that State is responsible for this. Narubha, Superintendent of Police, was seen talking with some of these by respectable people. Many peasants are forcibly brought from villages and made to parade streets in processions headed by these *goondas*. People have adopted remarkably non-violent attitude and have decided to suffer anything for asserting their right to meet in Parishad."

I have since learnt that Durbar Gopaldas Desai and his wife Bhaktiba were surrounded by the same gentlemen described in the message. Both suffered minor injuries. The *goondas* had the satisfaction for a time of preventing the meeting of the Parishad.

I have no reason whatsoever for disbelieving the messages which describe the events with a wealth of detail that carries conviction. What is more, they are sent by parties whom I hold to be incapable of conscious exaggeration or of invention.

In spite of this lawlessness, the reformers will win if they have grit enough to be ground to the dust, and if they really represent the wishes of the people. The public outside will help them. The Paramount Power is also bound by treaty obligations to help them, as has been amply proved by Pyarelal in the extracts produced from Lee Warner. But let the *satyagrahis* know that salvation comes from within. They will have to lose all, if they will save their souls and gain the freedom which is their birth-right.

## LIMBDI

“There are people who prize possessions before honour. They can only be a burden on a freedom movement. Freedom is always won by a few brave self-sacrificing souls, who will stake everything for the sake of honour.”

Though I have had protracted correspondence with the Limbdi people, I have refrained for a long time from saying anything about their woes. My silence was due to the hope that those who were trying to bring about peace between the Ruler and the people would succeed. But it was a vain hope. Much has happened since the beginning stages of that struggle. Perhaps, nowhere has the policy of ruthlessness been pursued with so much precision and persistence as in Limbdi. If the reports received by me are to be believed—and I have no reason to disbelieve them,—the peasants have been hunted out of their homes. The heaviest blow has been aimed at the hated *Bania* who was at one time the State's friend, favourite and main supporter. But he was to be crushed because he dared to think and talk of responsible government, dared to go amongst the peasantry and tell them what was due to them and how they could get it. The shops and houses of these merchants, who have performed *hijrat*, are practically looted. I cannot use any other term. There has not even been, so far as I know, any legal formality observed. The will of the administrator of the policy of ruthlessness is the supreme law. The idea is to terrorize the people into subjection. No wonder some have weakened. I would advise those who are in charge of the movement not to try to keep them from surrendering. Of course, they should be told what is in store for them. But there are people who prize possessions before honour. They can only be a burden on a freedom movement. Freedom is always won by a few brave self-sacrificing souls, who will stake everything for



the sake of honour. Those who understand the value and the necessity of sacrifice, whether they are few or many, should feel glad that their possessions in Limbdi have been taken away. They should not live in suspense, nor entertain any hope of immediate settlement. They should engage in healthy pursuits outside the State, always in the firm faith that a day must come when the people of Limbdi will come into their own. When that day comes, as it must, it will have come because of the sacrifice and the bravery of those who will have refused to bend before repression, however severe. Let them remember Thoreau's immortal words that possession is a vice and poverty a virtue in a tyrannical State.

So much on reliable evidence before me. But should Limbdi be a tyrannical State? If there is exaggeration in the statements made to me, let the State authorities send me a contradiction. I would gladly publish it. Better still will be an impartial judicial inquiry into the allegations made, if they are disputed. I wish to make a public appeal to the Thakore Saheb of Limbdi. I have the privilege of knowing him. I have enjoyed his hospitality. He has the reputation of being a pious, god-fearing man. It is not right that there should be this estrangement between him and his people, some of whom are well-known people with a reputation to lose and a stake in Limbdi. It would be wrong to regard them all as a discontented lot. They have no axes to grind. They have no earthly gain to make by ranging themselves against the State. They have incurred much material loss by becoming exiles from their own home. A wise ruler will think fifty times before facing the discontent of such people. He will conclude from it that there must be misrule and injustice on the part of his officials. He will summon the discontented people, listen to their complaints and pacify them. The Thakore Saheb has not adopted that course. It is not too late for him to do so even now.

## LIMBDI EXODUS ANNIVERSARY

“Not all that are born into this world live. Quite a lot die at birth. Many survive their childhood. Only a few cover the full span of life. Even so it is with human endeavour. Many rally to the call, but only a few persevere till the end.”

The Limbdi exodus has entered upon its fourth year. The *Hijratis* who took part in it deserve congratulations. Some have dropped out, out of weakness, as happens in all movements. Not all that are born into this world live. Quite a lot die at birth. Many survive their childhood. Only a few cover the full span of life. Even so it is with human endeavour. Many rally to the call, but only a few persevere till the end. But those who do, vindicate the sacrifice of those who have dropped by the way-side, and serve as beacon-lights to subsequent generations. The *Hijratis* must be prepared to prove their mettle in the final heat. Success will be theirs, only if they show themselves to be capable of making full sacrifice for the cause which they hold dear and to which they have dedicated themselves.

## MINORITY ADMINISTRATION

“Any resenting by the Princes or the Paramount Power of guidance of the people by the Congress must result in an inevitable, but wholly unnecessary, clash. How can people, who are one in blood and bound together by the closest social and economic ties, be artificially kept apart for any length of time?”

The Chief of Chamba is a minor. The State is, therefore, under direct British administration. And the administrator acts virtually as the Chief, and exercises all his powers. A correspondent from Chamba writes:

“Ours is a minority administered State, being directly under the control of the Paramount Power. We have been pressing for the repeal of the liberty-penalizing laws which have been enforced during the minority administration, and we do wish that popular element be introduced in the temporary administrative council, at least during the minority of the Raja.....In a case like ours, the Paramount Power cannot say that it can't intervene. If it has to safeguard the rights of the Ruler, has it not any liability towards the people?.....Will you throw some light on the question?”

The question is pertinent. There is no reason whatsoever why the people of administered States should not enjoy all the liberty that those in British India enjoy. Indeed, a wise and liberal-minded administrator of a State has within his jurisdiction greater opportunity for doing good than one in British India proper. A State administrator has much greater latitude than an official working under the routine of a Province. The latter is subject to a series of superiors and has only limited powers. An administrator of a State is much more than a Governor in his own little State. He is subject only to general supervision of the Resident of the Agency to which his State belongs. Therefore, there is no excuse whatsoever for any mistrule or failure of justice in administered States, if the Paramount Power's policy is declared in unambiguous terms and followed in

its entirety. But if the administration is not all it should be, it shows that there is no well-defined policy of the Paramount Power, so far as the people of the States are concerned. There is no insistence on the right being done by the States towards their people. There should be no such thing as policy of non-interference by the Paramount Power, in so far as the elementary rights of the people are concerned. The policy of non-interference can remain unchallenged only so long as the States' people are ignorant of their strength. But there is now-a-days too much consciousness among the people of the States to permit of the policy of non-interference being successful any longer. Denial of justice in administered States should be unthinkable. Let the people of Chamba publish unvarnished facts about the state of things there. I have little doubt that if there is any injustice done there, force of public opinion will secure the needed redress.

Absence of declared policy by the Paramount Power about the rights of the people of the States is perhaps glaringly demonstrated by the happenings in the little Hill State of Dharni. The shooting that took place there would have been impossible if the policy of the Paramount Power was known. The *Communiqué* issued by the Political Agent should not be the last word on the tragedy. He had no material before him to enable him to form a correct judgment. Every such firing should be followed up by an open, quick, judicial inquiry. The Chiefs, who get easily frightened and resort to firing, ought not to possess the power they have to-day over the lives of their subjects. But the public, who have to form an opinion, do not have a fair chance of doing so. They cannot set up an authoritative inquiry. And a Political Agent's *Communiqué* is no true guide. Take the Dharni *Communiqué*. I need not challenge the statements made in it. For aught I know, every word in it may be true. But it cannot command implicit confidence. In its very nature, it is a one-sided document. The Political Agent can produce no legal proof in support of his statements. He does not give the sources of his information. To inspire confidence, there should be a judicial inquiry carrying necessary consequences for the wrong

doer or doers, whether the wrong done is on the part of the State or the people. Thus, if the people sought to overwhelm the Rana, it was undoubtedly wrong, as it was if there was defiance of the order against Shri Bhagmal. It was wrong, too, if outsiders joined the alleged demonstration. The lightning ultimatum, if it was that, was a preposterous thing, deserving severe condemnation. Responsible government is made of sterner stuff. If the principality consists of only 5,000 persons and the revenue is Rs. 30,000, responsible government is a meaningless term. If people in every principality will take the law into their own hands, they will do irreparable damage to the cause. The All-India States' Conference is there to guide them. Every Praja Mandal should put itself under its guidance, in order to enable it to frame its case for freedom. There seems to be little doubt that there has been undue haste on the people's side.

But what about the Rana? Has he been dealing justly by his people? Was he really in danger of his life to warrant firing in self-defence? Every crowd is not necessarily a hostile crowd. Firing ought not to be treated lightly. Human life should have the same value in a State, as in British India. Every firing should be followed by the closest scrutiny and by suitable action, both of a punitive and of a preventive character. It is the duty of the Paramount Power to deprive Chiefs of powers of which they do not know judicious use. The whole question regarding the place of the States in Greater India requires overhauling.

A new epoch has come replacing the old. With the change of the times, there must be a change in the manners of all parties,—the Paramount Power, the Princes, their people, and last, but not least, the Congress if it survives the internal crisis that has overtaken it. It will be a mistake for the Paramount Power or the Princes to ignore the Congress, a body under whose shadow the people of the States from the commencement have been accustomed to grow and flourish. The Congress must guide them. Any resenting by the Princes or the Paramount Power of guidance of the people by the Congress must result in an in-

evitable, but wholly unnecessary, clash. How can a people, who are one in blood and bound together by the closest social and economic ties, be artificially kept apart for any length of time? Instead of suspecting or fearing the Congress, surely, the proper thing for all concerned is to welcome the Congress aid whenever it is available for the common good of both the Princes and the people.

No doubt, the Congress will have to recognize its own limitations. It can hope to work with effect only if its work is of a friendly and peaceful nature. It has to hold the scales evenly between parties. It must avoid all show of force or coercion. Thus, the reported participation by non-Dhamites in the demonstration should have been impossible under the Congress aegis. The Congress influence can be effectively exercised only if it retains its non-violence. Its only capital is its moral authority. Any other position must lead to internecine feud and bloodshed. Dhami has a lesson which Congressmen have to take to heart. This I say quite apart from the admitted fact that we do not yet know exactly what happened and where the blame actually lay. In the absence of a proper judicial inquiry, right action becomes impossible.

## LESSON OF DHAMI

“The Congress cannot give up its duty of guiding the States’ people in the hour of their need. Time was when the Congress was guiding and protecting the rights of the States as against the Paramount Power. If the Congress friendship was desired and welcomed by the States in need, it hardly becomes them to demur at their people seeking Congress advice, guidance and protection.”

We have not heard the last of Dhami. The truth is not yet out. The necessarily one-sided version of the Political Agent has been challenged by the Himalayan States’ Praja Mandal. Their statement shows how absolutely necessary it is to have an open judicial inquiry into the events that led to firing by the Rana of Dhami.

Some members of the Himalayan Mandal came to see me during my brief stay in Delhi. Dhami had made me think furiously. Was nothing possible to prevent such tragedies? I had much to say about it to the deputation, but I felt it would be wrong on my part to shoulder the burden of guiding the Himalayan States’ Praja Mandal. The responsibility was great. The issues at stake were equally great. I, therefore, felt that the matter should be handled not by me, but by the Standing Committee of the All-India States’ People Conference. The question of the States is daily assuming bigger and bigger proportions. The ruling Chiefs are becoming free with their rifles. They feel that they are safe so far as the Paramount Power is concerned. The Congress has not much prestige with them. Many of them are now evolving measures to crush the growing spirit of their people and make it impossible, if they can, for the Congress to give effective guidance to them, let alone to interfere. Nevertheless, the Congress has a duty to perform. I do not exactly know the constitution of the Conference, but I presume that in some shape or other it is connected with the Congress. Anyway, it is the

only body which is specially designed for guiding the States' people. It would be wrong for the States to resent such guidance. They should also realize that any resentment would be futile. The Congress cannot give up its duty of guiding the States' people in the hour of their need. Time was when the Congress was guiding and protecting the rights of the States as against the Paramount Power. If the Congress friendship was desired and welcomed by the States in need, it hardly becomes them to demur at their people seeking Congress advice, guidance and protection. That the Congress may not always be able to give the people effective assistance is, unfortunately, too true. The Congress has to forge the necessary sanction by putting the organization on a firmer footing, and by wise restraint to acquire credit for impartiality and strictest justice. If the Congress is to discharge its function in a becoming manner, it will have to insist upon the workers learning to be more accurate than they have been hitherto in preparing their cases. In order to ensure accuracy, the Standing Committee will have to subject to strict scrutiny everything coming to it. If unchallengeable accounts of the doings in the States, where even simple justice is denied, are published, they will afford a foundation of action.

I have merely indicated a line of approach. The Standing Committee will, no doubt, lay down its own policy and method of dealing with problems, as they arise from time to time. My object in writing these lines is to warn workers in the States against coming to me and expecting me to advise them. They should approach the Standing Committee. Even as I do not guide Congressmen on general matters falling within the function of the Working Committee, but hold myself at the disposal of that body, so shall I henceforth act in respect of new State problems. I may not give up guiding those with whom I am already directly concerned. I need hardly add that I shall continue to do what my special aptitude in matters affecting States may enable me to do, without being involved in the general direction of popular movements in them. I would ask workers in the States not to take up any forward movement without previous reference to any sanction of the Standing



Committee. It must be the duty of the Congress, acting through the States' People Conference, to avoid, if at all possible, a quarrel with the States.

## SIROHI

"If, however, the people have imbibed the right spirit of non-violent resistance, they are bound to gain their end, *lathi* charges notwithstanding."

Sirohi is a Rajputana State with a population of 186,639 and revenue of Rs. 970,000. It has figured in the Press for its *lathi* charge, said to be wholly unprovoked. I have authentic information of the event from Shri Gokul-bhai Bhatt who belongs to Sirohi. He has gained a reputation as an efficient teacher and a devoted Congress worker. He is saturated with the spirit of non-violence. He has been recently staying in Sirohi, attempting to gain elementary rights for the people. He thus writes about the *lathi* charge to Shri Kishorelal Mashruwala:

"The events of the 8th inst. in Sirohi make it a memorable day for its people. The police swooped down upon a meeting all of a sudden, began to pull down the Praja Mandal flag and delivered a *lathi* charge. This was not the National Flag. When the Hon. Resident, Mr. Lothian, was in Sirohi last February, he suggested that we could use the Praja Mandal flag in our office, in our processions and at our meetings. And we were acting accordingly. On the 3rd inst. the Dewan Sahib prohibited its use in our processions. In order to avoid a breach of the order, we discontinued the procession. There was no prohibition against its use at meetings, so we had it at our meeting. Suddenly, appeared the police in great style and, without warning, without any order, began to pull down the flag. Some of the workers held on to it. They could not, however, keep their hold for long against the superior police force. They were separated. I had somehow retained my hold. So they dragged me with the flag. They caught me by the neck and beat me. Then, began an indiscriminate *lathi* charge on the audience. Some notabilities are said to have been inciting the police not to spare the people who said: 'You may beat us as much as you like. We will not leave the meeting.' Women were also bravely taking part in this struggle. The charge must have lasted about seven minutes. The meeting continued to the end. The event has not demoralized the people. It has put heart into them."

Knowing Shri Gokulbhai as I do, I have no reason to disbelieve his account which is in Gujarati. It reflects no credit upon the Sirohi authorities. I have before me a long list of the grievances of the people. They are trying, in a perfectly constitutional manner, to seek redress. But instead of granting redress, the authorities are evidently trying to crush their spirit. If, however, the people have imbibed the right spirit of non-violent resistance, they are bound to gain their end, *lathi* charges notwithstanding.

## SIROHI

“It is a good omen that workers in the States are, wherever possible, organizing themselves in a resolute and dignified manner.”

From Sirohi comes the welcome news that the arrests made last year of seven leaders did not break the spirit of the people. They have been observing the 22nd (the Arrest Day) of every month with due solemnity. They are having meetings, *prabhat pheris*, spinning, selling *Khadi*, etc. It is a good omen that workers in the States are, wherever possible, organizing themselves in a resolute and dignified manner. If, on the one hand, they learn the art of defying suffering, however severe, and, on the other, of remaining strictly within the limits prescribed in non-violent action, all would be well. All constructive effort means true education and organization of the people.

## PEACE IN SIROHI

“Let me hope that the relations between the two (the State and the *satyagrahis*) will daily become more and more cordial, and that there never will be any cause for quarrel between the State and the people.”

Sometime ago, I had regretfully to comment on happenings in Sirohi. I am, therefore, happy to be able to note that there is now peace between the State and the people. The credit may be equally divided between the State and the *satyagrahis*. The *satyagrahis* were ably led by Acharya Gokulbhai, who is a firm believer in the principles of *satyagraha*. Let me hope that the relations between the two will daily become more and more cordial, and that there never will be any cause for quarrel between the State and the people.

## REPRESSION IN JODHPUR

"It is not right for the Princes and their advisers to ignore the time spirit and to resort to such statements and acts as cannot stand impartial scrutiny."

News about repression in Jodhpur is disquieting. The Jodhpur Lok Parishad, which, according to the information in my possession, has been before now held in respect by the local authorities, has suddenly been declared illegal. Several prominent workers are under detention without trial. Speeches and processions are banned.

What is worse is the speech delivered by the Maharaja Bahadur justifying the order. It reads as if a mountain was in labour. The following are extracts from the report of the speech:

"Unfortunately, there is a small but vocal minority who, by their deeds and actions, have recently given ample proof of their determination to find fault with everything which the Government do, and of their intention to hinder and embarrass the Government by all possible means, unless the reigns of Government are placed in their own inexperienced hands.

"I refer in particular to a political organization which has brought itself to undesirable prominence under the title of 'Lok Parishad.' Members of the 'Lok Parishad' have recently become increasingly violent in their denunciations of all established order and traditions. The members of this party ask us to believe that the sole panacea for the many diverse afflictions, which we in common with all communities suffer, is to vote for and place ourselves unreservedly in the hands of the 'Lok Parishad.' We are asked to believe that with the advent to power of the 'Lok Parishad', there will be created a new heaven and a new earth, and I, the Maharaja of Jodhpur, am desired to place the destinies of my house and my people in the hands of the 'Lok Parishad', in order that peace may reign and 'freedom' be enjoyed by all.

"This is, indeed, a tall order and a bold demand, and I am not surprised that requests have poured in to me from the great, sane and sober-minded majority of my subjects to put a stop to these extravagances and pretensions. If the 'Lok Parishad' consisted of men of political and administrative experience, men of ripe edu-

cation, or of high professional attainments, we might be well advised to give to their words and expressions that serious consideration which thoughtful citizens would undoubtedly accord. But we find, now that an insistent clamour focusses our attention on the subject, that the 'Lok Parishad' consists mainly of inexperienced young men, who do not appear to have achieved much success in their various vocations.....

"They show no sign whatever of any co-operative spirit; rather do they seem bent on finding fault whenever it is possible to do so. In their case, free speech has degenerated into licence, and this at a time when a terrible War threatens in the distance and a very bad famine is at our doors.....

"I do not consider it consistent with my duty, as a loyal ally of the British Government, to allow a groundless political agitation to grow and spread in my State in time of War; nor am I prepared any longer to allow any open campaign of subversive agitation, manifestly designed to encourage our peasantry to revolt and to corrupt our youth."

It seems that the voice is the Maharaja's, but the hand that has prepared it is not his. The speech consists of palpable exaggerations. The Parishad has more than 30 branches in the State and has many experienced men as members. I have seen correspondence in which their co-operation has been desired and sought for. The Lok Parishad has never put forth the claim attributed to it in the quotations. It has responsible government within the State as its goal. It has carried on agitation in the recognized manner. I suggest that it is highly undignified for the advisers of the Maharaja to put into his mouth words that have no correlation to facts. They have not hesitated even to drag the War and the 'alliance' with Britain to justify the high-handed action adopted towards the Parishad. The Parishad, I am sure, will come out unscathed, if the workers can stand the test of self-suffering. Those who are imprisoned will be the salt and saviours of Jodhpur, for they will be trusted by the people as their real servants. It is not right for the Princes and their advisers to ignore the time spirit and to resort to such statements and acts as cannot stand impartial scrutiny. I see from their leaflet that the Parishad have asked for an open trial. They deny all the charges that are mentioned in the Maharaja's speech. The least that is owing to the public

is proof of the indictment against the Parishad. Meanwhile, and whether the Parishad gets justice or not, I hope that its members will peacefully and bravely stand the sufferings that may be inflicted on them.



## STATES AND THEIR PEOPLE

"I would fain hope that the Princes and their advisers will, for their own sakes and for the good of India, curb the tendency in many States which cannot be described by any other adjective than lawless."

I have suggested in these columns that the people of the States should remain calm and, so far as possible, not precipitate a clash, as events are shaping themselves in spite of us. But there is a limit to every such proposal. In Travancore, Mysore and Jodhpur things seem to have gone beyond endurance.

I have already referred to Travancore where two of its best workers have been cast into prison for the simple reason that they are too public-spirited to submit to autocracy.<sup>1</sup>

The same thing is happening in Mysore though in a slightly different manner. The cause is identical. The Mysore State Congress must not be tolerated. I know how the members have refrained from raising large issues, save that they must keep the goal of liberty before the Mysoreans.

And now comes serious news from Jodhpur. There, as in other States, the local Parishad people have tried to work in co-operation with authority. They have raised no awkward questions. But the Rajputana States, like many others, have many *jagirdars* who are co-sharers with the Princes and derive authority from them. They may be termed States within States. These have no law governing them. The British power has no direct control over them. The Princes are ever afraid of them. They dare not interfere with the exercise of the *jagirdars'* authority over the people within their jurisdiction.

<sup>1</sup> See *Travancore*—p. 349.

The result is that the people within these *jagirdaris* are the worst off in the Indian hierarchy. There was a clash, as far as my information goes, between the people and one of the *jagirdars*. This incident promises to lead to a major issue. Associations favoured by authority, as in British India, are, it is said, being set up against the popular Parishad. If a deliberate attempt is being made to suppress the local associations, the latter must accept the challenge and risk the worst in the full faith that liberty and truth cannot be suppressed for ever. But I would fain hope that the Princes and their advisers will, for their own sakes and for the good of India, curb the tendency in many States which cannot be described by any other adjective than lawless.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Why The Difference?*—A Professor writes:

“You have advised the British to withdraw. About the Princes you say: ‘But I would fain hope that the Princes and their advisers will, for their own sakes and for the good of India, curb the tendency in many States which cannot be described by any other adjective than lawless.’ Why not ask the Princes, whose tyranny is older and, perhaps, more deep-rooted than that of the British, to abdicate immediately?”

I am surprised that the Professor has failed to see the distinction between the Princes and the Paramount Power. The Princes (present) are a creation of the Paramount Power. They derive their authority from it. Their abdication will not end the Princely rule. Another will immediately take the vacant place and in the absence of one, the State will be under British administration. Thus, whichever way you look, you will find the British Power by its very nature blocking the way to Truth—*Harijan*: May 31, 1942.

## JODHPUR

"I wish the Jodhpur workers all success.....They will have abundant sympathy from all over India, but dry sympathy will give them no help. Help must come from their own resolute will and unflinching courage."

From Jodhpur comes the news that Shri Jainarayan Vyas has been arrested for daring to seek an interview with the Maharaja, and for proposing to carry on the movement for responsible government in Jodhpur.

Evidently, Shri Jainarayan Vyas had no other choice. I wish the Jodhpur workers all success. But I hope they have realized that they have to plough the lonely furrow. They will have abundant sympathy from all over India, but dry sympathy will give them no help. Help must come from their own resolute will and unflinching courage.

## JODHPUR TRAGEDY

“.....All the worst things that were experienced during the *satyagraha* campaigns in British India are being repeated in Jodhpur. Only, in Jodhpur, they are being done far from the public gaze and a first class tragedy may pass unnoticed, and may be buried like many such that have been buried and are being buried even to-day.”

As I had feared, Jodhpur *satyagraha* has taken a serious and ugly turn. Heaps of paper have come in. From these I gather that arrests are multiplying. *Lathi*-charges are a daily occurrence. Official circulars have been issued prohibiting the use of private premises by *satyagrahis*. In fact, all the worst things that were experienced during the *satyagraha* campaigns in British India are being repeated in Jodhpur. Only, in Jodhpur, they are being done far from the public gaze and a first class tragedy may pass unnoticed and may be buried like many such that have been buried and are being buried even to-day. The cause of all these troubles is one, and so is the remedy. Till it is successfully applied, the painful drama will continue in some shape or form. The British Government cannot escape blame and responsibility for every such happening in the States. It is bound by treaty obligation to protect the people of the States from inhumanities, such as those going on in Jodhpur in the name of law and order. The prisoners have no respite even behind the prison bars. The food is bad, usual facilities are denied to them. By way of protest, Shri Jainarayan Vyas has undertaken a hunger-strike till the grievances are redressed or unto death. If he has to die, the death will be upon those who are primarily responsible for the grievances which compels hunger-strikes unto death. Dr. Dwarkanath Kachru has sent an instructive note on Jodhpur, from which I take the following for public information:

"The direct authority of the Jodhpur Government extends over 17% of the total area of the State; the remaining area—about 83%—is owned by the *Jagirdars*, about 1300 in number. These *Jagirdars* are mostly autonomous internally and pay fixed tributes to the Maharaja.

"For a long time now, the Political Department has been controlling the affairs in Jodhpur. Thrice, during this century, the State passed under the direct control and supervision of the Political Department. At present, Englishmen—a large number of them—occupy prominent positions in the State. The Prime Minister is also a retired British official.

"Apart from the British officials, other non-State subject elements also predominate in the State administration. There is, thus, a "Mulki Movement" which is becoming stronger day by day. There is also a very strong rivalry between the different castes, Rajputs, Brahmins etc., which is very often exploited by the Government to play one against the other, or to prevent the Lok Parishad from growing stronger.

"The Marwar Lok Parishad, formed in 1938, became, during the course of these four years, a tremendous force in Jodhpur. Because of the general political backwardness of the Rajputana States, a more advanced mass movement in Jodhpur was destined to lead the vanguard of the popular movement in the whole of Rajputana. An All-Rajputana Political Conference was also announced to be held in Jodhpur in March, 1940. The mass awakening in Rajputana caused grave anxiety to the Political Department, and the Jodhpur Government was instructed to act promptly. The Jodhpur Government, therefore, declared the Lok Parishad illegal and put all its prominent men in jails. Mass arrests, followed by terrible repression, ended in a compromise with the Government. Marwar Lok Parishad began its constructive work once again and soon came to be recognized by all the people in Marwar, both in the *Khalsa* and *Jagiri* territories. The Parishad contested the Municipal elections and emerged as the majority party in the Board. Its leader became the Chairman.

"Since the War began, the governments of Indian States have changed their attitude towards popular movements. The War had, in fact, provided an excuse to suppress civil liberties and check the growth of popular forces. In Jodhpur, where the Political Department has a hand in shaping the policy of the Government, Prime Minister, Sir Donald Field, set to work according to the instructions from above. Funds had to be procured for War and the whole State had to be put on War footing. Money had largely to be procured from the *Jagirdars*, who must, in turn, be protected against the popular movement in the *Jagirs*, led by the Lok Parishad. The State Government, thus, assumed an attitude of neutrality towards the *Jagirs* and allowed the *Jagirdars* to squeeze even the last drop of blood from their subjects.

“But the Lok Parishad could not ignore the grievances and demands of the masses of Marwar living in *Jagirs*. The Parishad did not want the abolition of the *Jagirs*, but it certainly wanted the betterment of the people of *Jagirs*. Repeated requests were made to the Government to intervene and secure a just and a humane treatment for the tenants in *Jagirs*, but unfortunately the Government chose to act differently. They encouraged the *Jagirdars* and suppressed the Lok Parishad workers. Briefly stated, the conditions in *Jagirs* are: (a) the tenants demand regular *latai* (allocation of the shares of the *Jagirdars* and their tenants). But the *Jagirdars* would not arrange to do it regularly and often evaded with the result that the tenants suffered, (b) the tenants also want the abolition of such cesses which have been declared illegal in the courts of the States.

“The Government of Jodhpur repeatedly refused to come to the help of the tenants and even refused to stop the exaction of such cesses which were declared illegal in their own courts of law. The Government went a step further and encouraged the *Jagirdars* themselves to take up cudgels against the Lok Parishad. Thus, when the *Jagirdars* beat and victimized and even burnt the houses of the Parishad workers, the Government refused to intervene.”

## JODHPUR

"Deaths will occur even in the best of circumstances. We may not, therefore, always blame authority whenever a death occurs in a prison. Every case has to be examined and judged on merits."

Shri Sriprakasa, who went to Jodhpur at my request to do whatever he could to ease the atmosphere, interview the authorities and know their version of the affair, has returned and given me his report which leaves no doubt that free use has been made by the authorities of the *lathi* in order to repress the people. He, nevertheless, tells me that some members of the Lok Parishad have not always been discreet in their language. He was told by the authorities that they had no objection to the Lok Parishad holding meetings and asking for responsible government, so long as the language kept within bounds. He also tells me that the Jodhpur Government are anxious to reduce to some kind of order the admitted irresponsibility of *Jagirdars*, but that the passage from feudalism to legalism must take some time. So far as the treatment of political prisoners is concerned, Shri Sriprakasa has hope that it would be better, though he has also hope that, given some accommodation on the part of the local workers, there should be no political prisoners at all. If all his hopes are fulfilled, the visit although brought about accidentally, will have borne ample result and the hunger-strike of the prisoners and the sad death of Balmukand Bisa would not have gone in vain. Shri Sriprakasa tells me, too, that though the death was due somewhat, no doubt, to bad prison accommodation, there was no callousness on the part of the prison authorities. Deaths will occur even in the best of circumstances. We may not, therefore, always blame authority whenever a death occurs in a prison. Every case has to be examined and judged on merits. I understand that Balmukand Bisa

was a very fine worker. He leaves a large family to mourn him. It is hoped that the citizens of Jodhpur will provide for the widow and children to whom I send my condolences.

Shri Sriprakasa has brought me a leaflet from Beawar, which contains language which a *satyagrahi* will not use. It is to be hoped that the workers will be careful in the choice of the language they use. I would ask them to keep themselves in touch with Shri (not Dr. as I had called him by mistake) Kachru, who will be in Jodhpur till the whole trouble has subsided.



## PANDIT KACHRU EXTERNEED

“How long will the States regard people from outside their jurisdiction as foreigners and deal with them summarily as the Jodhpur authorities have done? And how long must they allow themselves to be treated as such? The Congress has exercised the greatest self-restraint in this matter. Its men deserve a better treatment.”

Pandit Kachru is a well-known public worker, attached to the States' People Conference. When Shri Jainarayan Vyas went on hunger-strike at Jodhpur, he was deputed by the President, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, to proceed to Jodhpur and watch events and report to me. For reasons known to the authorities, and unknown to Pandit Kachru, he was served with an externment order on the 5th inst., at 11.40 P.M. to depart from Jodhpur the next morning by 7-15 A.M. train. He telephoned to me for instructions and Mahadev Desai who answered the phone advised him, in the first instance, to obey the order and report. He is now in Wardha, trying to finish his report to the point he was able to reach in Jodhpur.

Here is the order:

“From information received, the Government of Jodhpur is satisfied that Dwarkanath Kachru (name) is acting in a manner prejudicial to the maintenance of public order and the efficient prosecution of War.

“With a view to prevent the said Dwarkanath Kachru from so acting, the Government of Jodhpur, in exercise of its powers conferred by Rule 26 (1) (a) of the Defence of India Rules, as applied to the Jodhpur State territory, is pleased to order that the said Dwarkanath Kachru shall remove himself from Marwar in railway train 1 up of 6-7-42 (manner) which leaves Jodhpur at 7-15 A.M. (via Marwar Junction) and further that the said Dwarkanath Kachru shall not return to Marwar for a period of one year from the date of this order.

“The Inspector General of Police, Jodhpur, is hereby directed to see that the above order is promptly carried out.”

The important question arising is, how long will the States regard people from outside their jurisdiction as foreigners and deal with them summarily as the Jodhpur authorities have done? And how long must they allow themselves to be treated as such? The Congress has exercised the greatest self-restraint in this matter. Its men deserve a better treatment. If the authorities have justification for their order, they should publicly state it. It is not a matter that can be forgotten. Pandit Kachru ought to be able to return, unless satisfactory explanation is offered for his externment.

*Sevagram*, 12-7-'42

Since the foregoing was written, much is reported to have happened in Jodhpur. Fortunately, the fast has satisfactorily ended. But repression is said to be going on merrily. I refrain from giving the details. I understand that the State has made a generous use of my last note, for it contains certain statements crediting them with what appeared to be praiseworthy. Now I have angry letters, repudiating principally the admission made by Shri Sriprakasa that Balmukund Bisa's death was not due to any ill-treatment by the State. My correspondents say that Shri Sriprakasa, having not had much time, was misled. I have asked the correspondents for proofs and, if I get them, I hope to submit them to the authorities, instead of publishing them straightway. I can only hope that the favourable impression created on Shri Sriprakasa will not be belied by any action of the authorities. I hope, next week, to deal with the simple demands of the Lok Parishad.

*Sevagram*, 20-7-'42

## DEMANDS OF MARWAR LOK PARISHAD

“Let me hope that the Jodhpur Durbar will satisfy the moderate demands of the Parishad, and let me further hope that the people of Jodhpur, having resolved upon achieving their purpose through suffering, will not rest till they have reached their immediate goal.”

The following are the demands of the Marwar Lok Parishad in Jodhpur as supplied to me:

“1. The Government of Jodhpur shall reaffirm the terms of the compromise of 1940, arrived at between the Government and the Marwar Lok Parishad as a result of the last *satyagraha* movement in Marwar.

2. The Government shall see that rule of law is established in the State and, more especially, in the *Jagiri* areas, and that full Civil Liberties (in terms of the agreement of 1940) are enjoyed by the Lok Parishad workers, without any fear of intimidation or victimization (*i.e.*, physical violence or damage to property, etc.) at the hands of *Jagirdars* or their subordinates.

3. The New Reforms (Advisory Assembly), recently introduced, shall immediately be scrapped and the Constitutional Reforms, originally passed in the Council and assented to by His Highness the Maharaja, shall, instead, be introduced as an earnest of further constitutional development on the path to full Responsible Government, under the aegis of His Highness the Maharaja Saheb Bahadur.

4. The Municipal Act (passed in 1940, but not yet enforced) shall be revised, consistently with the growing needs and aspirations of the people, and real Local Self-Government shall be established with the people's representatives enjoying real powers.

5. Government shall make effective and satisfactory arrangements for regular *Latai*.

*Note:*—In this connection, mention must be made of the circular of the Government to the District Officers ordering them to arrange for regular *Latai* at places where it was delayed. The circular was unfortunately withdrawn by the Government in 1941, thereby leaving the district authorities powerless and the cultivators at the mercy of the *Jagirdars*.

6. The exaction of illegal and unlawful cesses and other exactions shall immediately be stopped and proper arrangements shall

forthwith be made to see that the practice is not resumed. In addition, the Government shall appoint a Commission of Inquiry to go into the *Jagiri* problem as a whole, to make necessary recommendations regarding the levy of various cesses, taxes and other exactions held lawful at present.

7. The Government shall immediately enforce the Registration of Arms Act in the case of *Jagirdars* also. The present policy of making invidious discrimination between the *Jagirdar* class, in whose case the date of registration is being postponed from month to month, and the rest of the people, who have been compelled to register their arms and secure licences for possessing them, is fraught with grave consequences for the internal peace and security of Marwar, especially in these days of grave crisis.

8. An inquiry shall also be held into the following happenings:

(a) The excesses committed by the *Jagirdars* and their men on the Lok Parishad workers in the *Jagirs* of Chandawal, Ladnun, Roru etc.

(b) Ill-treatment meted out by the Jail authorities to the political prisoners.

(c) The *Latbi* charge and other excesses of the 19th June and the subsequent days."

There is nothing in the demands that one can cavil at. There is nothing extravagant in them. They take note of the limitations of Rajputana States, whatever the cause thereof. It is for the compliance with these demands that Shri Jainarain Vyas and his companions are in jail and Bisa lost his life. It is for that reason that many Jodhpuris, including women—a strange sight in Jodhpur—have resolved to offer civil disobedience. Let me hope that the Jodhpur Durbar will satisfy the moderate demands of the Parishad, and let me further hope that the people of Jodhpur, having resolved upon achieving their purpose through suffering, will not rest till they have reached their immediate goal.

## LEADERS MUST LEAD

“We should never develop the requisite qualities of leadership, unless leaders shoulder responsibility and even dare to commit mistakes in acting contrary to the advice of persons like me.”

A Cutch worker came in yesterday and said:

“Some leaders in Cutch are telling the people there that but for your stopping civil disobedience, they would to-day be enjoying responsible government or something near it.”

I must deny having stopped civil disobedience in Cutch or for that matter elsewhere. All I gave was my opinion. I had told Shri Mulraj, who had come to consult me, that the workers should weigh my opinion in the light of their own personal experience of things and adopt it only if it coincided with their own experience. It should be noted that my opinion was not given publicly. If it was not acceptable to the local leaders, it need never have been published. Even now in Cutch, as elsewhere, responsible leaders are free to act according to their own judgment. We should never develop the requisite qualities of leadership, unless leaders shoulder responsibility and even dare to commit mistakes in acting contrary to the advice of persons like me. Here there would be no question of indiscipline, for I am not in active command anywhere. I give advice as an expert when reference is made to me. Those who seek my advice will wrong themselves and those whom they lead, if they will suppress their own judgment when it seems contrary to mine, especially when mine is not based on direct local knowledge.

## A REPUDIATION

“My note<sup>1</sup> has served a very useful purpose in the other States, if not in Cutch. The leaders have a greater sense of responsibility and realize that my opinion should have no weight with them, except to the extent that it appeals to their heads and hearts.”

Janab Yusuf Meherally, President, Cutch Prajakiya Parishad, writes:

“In a recent issue of the *Harijan*, under the caption *Leaders Must Lead*, you have made reference to Cutch which raises one or two points that need to be cleared up. The note has it that a Cutch worker informed you that ‘some leaders in Cutch are telling the people there that but for your stopping civil disobedience, they would to-day be enjoying responsible government or something near it.’

“We were not a little surprised to read this, for, to the best of my knowledge, none of our responsible workers in Cutch has said this. Since the suspension of the *satyagraha* by us under your advice on April 1, I alone must have addressed over 200 meetings all over Cutch. My other colleagues in Cutch have similarly done a great deal of touring. But nowhere have our leading workers given expression to such sentiments. In fact, at a public meeting in the capital town of Bhuj, which is our headquarters, I asked the large gathering present if any among them had heard these or similar words. The unanimous reply was in the negative. I asked again if there were any persons in the audience who had recollection of hearing anything that even resembled this. Not one such person was there. I do not wish to labour the point any further. But we could not help feeling hurt that you should have lent the weight of your name to a statement which, on further enquiry, you would have found to be incorrect.”

I gladly publish this repudiation. But I must say that there was no occasion for the President to feel hurt. Had I mentioned names, I would certainly have referred to him before writing the note. But when a responsible worker asked me if I had stopped civil disobedience in Cutch and

<sup>1</sup> *Leaders Must Lead*.

wanted a public declaration from me, I could not wait for confirmation before giving my answer. Nor does the present repudiation take the matter any further than where it was left by my note, except that Janab Meherally and those whom he asked did not make the statement alluded to. The proper procedure is to challenge my informant to produce the names of those who he knew had made the statement imputed to them, or unreservedly to withdraw his allegation. I may inform the reader that I have adopted the procedure myself and asked my informant to produce the names or to withdraw his allegation. Meanwhile, my note has served a very useful purpose in the other States, if not in Cutch. The leaders have a greater sense of responsibility and realize that my opinion should have no weight with them, except to the extent that it appeals to their heads and hearts. They are solely responsible for any action they take. And, naturally. They alone know the situation at first hand within their own spheres of action.

## NARSINGHGARH

“I hope the Maharaja and his advisers will remember that civil liberty means the fullest liberty, consistent with non-violence, to speak, write and do what the people like, even though it may mean strong criticism of the acts of the State.”

The reader knows that, at the invitation of the Dewan of Narsinghgarh and with the consent of the Secretary of the Central India States Conference, I had sent Rajkumari Amrit Kaur to inquire into certain allegations made against the State. The Rajkumari was given every facility by the State to make what inquiry she liked. Shri Kanhaiyalal Vaidya was present during the inquiry. The Rajkumari's way was made easy by the State giving her every facility. The immediate cause of complaint was soon settled to the satisfaction of all concerned. The Maharaja has given cautious assurances of civil liberty. The people of these States have hitherto been strangers to civil liberty and all it means. I hope the Maharaja and his advisers will remember that civil liberty means the fullest liberty, consistent with non-violence, to speak, write and do what the people like, even though it may mean strong criticism of the acts of the State. He has, however, given full permission to Shri Vaidya to do *Khadi*, Harijan and other constructive work. He has also requested the Rajkumari to send Shri Shankerlal Banker or a representative of the A.I.S.A. to the State, in order to explore the possibilities of *Khadi* work in the State which grows plenty of cotton. He has also shown interest in other village industries and basic education. I hope that the beginning so well made will continue uninterrupted, and that the people of Narsinghgarh will show political, economic, social and moral progress on an ever-increasing scale. From the correspondence I had with the Dewan, I have reason to hope for the best. Much will depend upon the sympathy of the Maharaja and his



advisers towards all-round progress and the restrained manner in which the workers use the liberty given by the State. I must congratulate the Maharaja and the Dewan on having shown wisdom and courage in calling in the Congress aid (for my aid is virtually Congress aid) for settling their domestic difficulty. This is, perhaps, the second instance of its kind.

## PRAJA MANDALS AND CONGRESS

"At the present moment, when everything is in the melting pot, no heroics in politics are called for in the States."

Thus writes a correspondent from an Indian State:

"On page 67 of *Harijan* (of March 8, 1942) there is a question<sup>1</sup> which is of great interest and importance to Praja Mandals in Indian States. The latter part of the question is: 'Who should be responsible for political policies there (in States)?' I am afraid that the answer does not sufficiently clear the position. From what appeared in this connection in *Harijan* before, and from the present answer, in an indirect way, it seems that you wish the Praja Mandals to be responsible for the political policy in the States concerned. It would follow that the local branch of the Congress would not independently initiate any political policy or come into conflict with the policy of the local Praja Mandal."

I think there was no confusion about my answer. The Congress organization has its centre and chief work in British India. It has branches in some States. They are not expected to dabble in local politics. They are, therefore, advised to confine themselves to constructive work. But Praja Mandals have to do constructive work always, and political work properly so called wherever it is allowed, or where there are brave and able enough men to carry on the political struggle. It is, thus, purely a question of local ability and opportunity. At the present moment, when everything is in the melting pot, no heroics in politics are called for in the States.

<sup>1</sup>Q. Please clarify the position of the Congress *vis-a-vis* Praja Mandal Committees in States. Who should be responsible for political policies there?

A. Praja Mandals are independent bodies, having no official connection with the Congress. They may or may not take their inspiration from the Congress policies. Such being the case, I should advise them not to irritate State authority by an unnecessary identification with the Congress—*Harijan*: March 8, 1942.

## QUESTION BOX

### STATE PRAJA MANDALS

*Q.* What is the duty, in the event of civil disobedience, of members of Praja Mandals in the States and the rest of the people of the States?

*A.* If civil disobedience is started by the Congress, it will be as against the British Government. The people of the States cannot and ought not to offer any civil disobedience in the States. Hence it follows, that the Praja Mandals will remain unaffected by the Congress civil disobedience. But individuals of the States can, if they wish, join the civil disobedience campaign in British India. They can, therefore, send in their names to the nearest Congress Committee outside their State.

### INDIAN STATES AND CONGRESS ACTIVITY

*Q.* Should Congress members be enrolled in Indian States?

*A.* This question has been frequently put and answered by me. I have always held that it would be inadvisable to enrol Congress members in the States. There is danger of friction and clash with authority, and the latter interfering with this work of organization. Indian States' subjects, who may be anxious to become Congress members, can enrol themselves on the register of the nearest Congress office of their province in British India. But it would be better for them not to bother about membership, and to confine themselves to such activity as is possible within their own States. This can be largely only constructive work. It will arouse self-consciousness and solidarity among the masses. In fact, it may, on the whole, be better to make people Congress-minded, in the true sense of the term, than to enrol them as Congress members.

### PRINCES IN DEMOCRATIC INDIA

*Q.* What place would you assign to the Princes in democratic India ?

*A.* I would give them a fat commission as trustees of their people. I would say to them, however, that they must work for this commission. They would have the same privileges as the British King enjoys. They are, after all, his vassals. They cannot be greater than he. The King of England cannot hang a man. He can only act through proper channels. He is a private citizen, though the first one. If I can like monarchy at all, I would like the limited monarchy of England. And, why should not the people of the States determine what they want ? As far as justice for the people is concerned, I have already said that their supreme courts must be subject to the High Court of India.

### MY ATTITUDE TOWARDS INDIAN STATES

*Q.* What is your attitude towards the Indian States and their Rulers ?

*A.* My attitude towards the Indian States and their Rulers is that of perfect friendship. I desire a radical reform in their constitution. The condition in many States is most deplorable, but reform has to come from within and it is a matter for adjustment between the Rulers and the subjects, save for such pressure as is bound to be exerted upon them by the expression of enlightened public opinion in their neighbourhood.

### THE PRINCES' DETERMINATION

*Q.* The Princes seem to be determined to maintain their privileges even after the departure of the British. Therefore, there is need for a plain declaration that they would have no place in a Free India. My feeling is that you have so far shown them more consideration than they deserve.

*A.* If you are right in your judgment, the privileges themselves will destroy the Princes. Privileges that service of the people bestows will always persist. But most of the paraphernalia, that 'pomp and circumstance' account for, will most certainly go.

But I cannot make the declaration you will have me to make. It is contrary to the spirit of non-violence, which seeks not to destroy but to purify. That which is beyond purification dies without any outside effort, even as a body which has become wholly diseased dies.

If, after the total withdrawal of the British Power, there is found to be no awakening among the masses, India will be split up into so many feudal strong-holds, each striving to swallow the small fry, and some bidding for overlordship. What I am hoping and striving for is an irresistible mass urge on the part of the people, and an intelligent response on the part of all privileged classes to the popular demand. But because I know that this picture is for the time being imaginary, I am quite prepared for the worst. Hence my statement that I would end the present state of things even at the risk of anarchy reigning supreme in the land.

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